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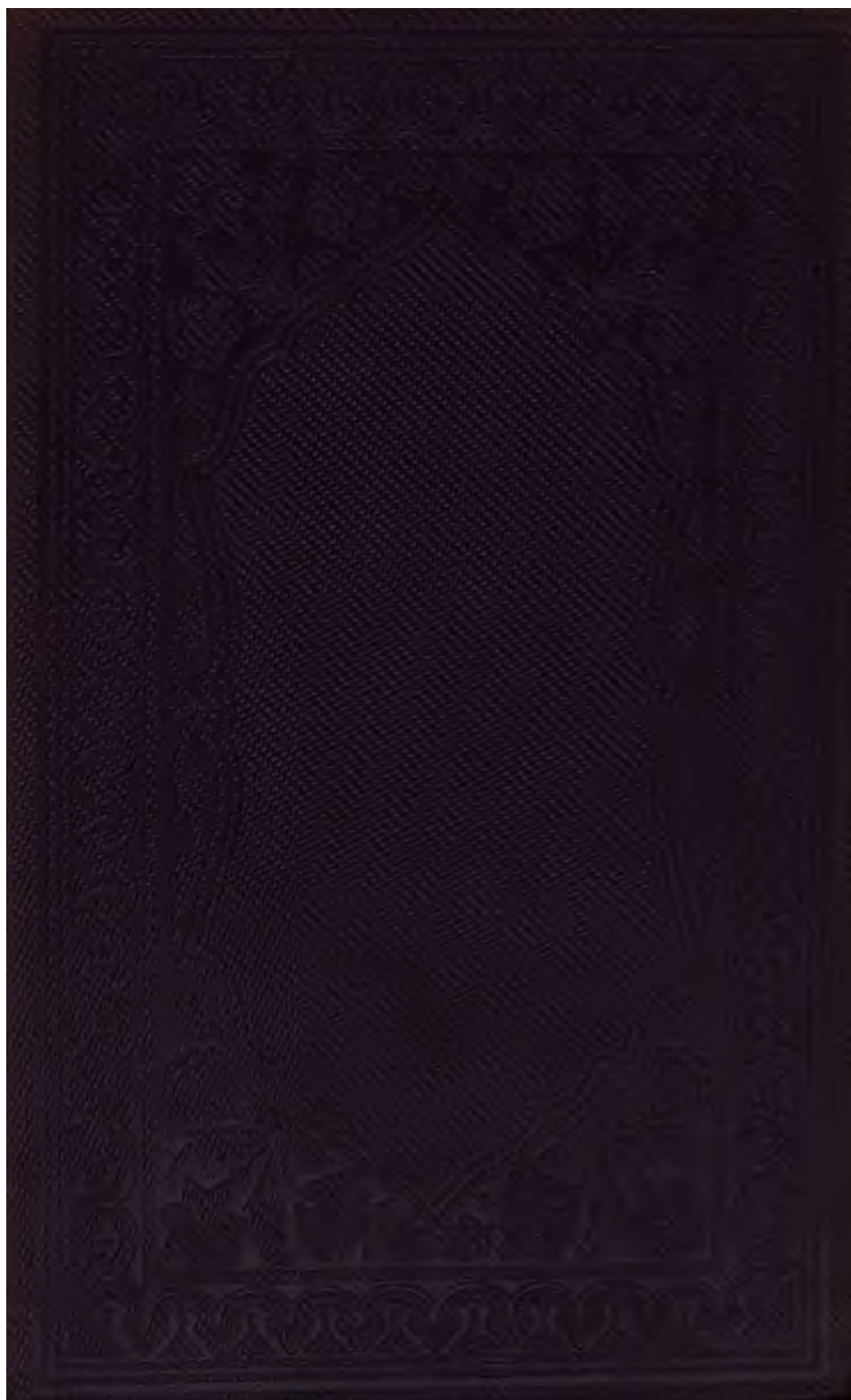
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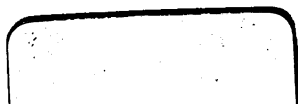
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WAIT AND HOPE.

BY

JOHN EDMUND READE,

AUTHOR OF

"ITALY," "THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS,"

ETC., ETC.

"What teach us the great angels, Life and Time?
To sympathize with human frailties,
And know our own; to bear and to forbear,
To wait and hope: wisdom's far peaks attained
By the tired spirit and oppressed eye."

Revelations of Life.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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WAIT AND HOPE.

CHAPTER I.

There
Grew the sedges wild, and they
Through the choked-up stream were spread ;
The green pathway now was grey,
And the voice of the thin wind
Sounded like the tone unkind
Of a friend who turns his head
From you, and his welcome fled.

The Brother and Sister.

THE aspects of Nature have become insensibly changed by the operation of railroads, and her original lines of beauty more than compromised. Where once the many-winding road serpented along the landscape, hedged •

by the greenest verdure, and overhung with trees in long array, the straight rigid railway stretches onward unswervingly to its end, intersected in its oneness of path by many a lesser line. No detours or shirkings from difficulty are made, save those caused by some rare and insurmountable obstacle. The glen is cloven through to its innermost recesses. The forehead of the hill is scarified by a reticulated net-work of iron, or its bowels are entered, descending from thence, until lost in inextricable mazes along the valley.

But of all landscapes, the face of English scenery, from its more contracted allotments, is most changed thereby. Her ordinary roads have dwindled away as if consumption had galloped over them. The stage-coach, with all its collateral and convivial reminiscences, has become a myth and a dream; and "the warmest welcome at an inn" is now no more.

Mine Host, Boniface, fat and rubicund,

posted at his hotel-door, with his white napkin hung over his arm, while hastening forth to welcome you, with the waiters bustling around, and pointing to the dinner-room, and announcing the half-hour allotted for bolting it, are vanished like the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The joyous coach-and-four is metamorphosed and lost in a long, melancholy-looking file of them, nailed together like larks on a spit, and mounted on a sad pre-eminence. You are locked therein like birds in a cage.

The coachman, under his seven-fold shield of capes, vanishes, and is lost in the shirted stokesman.

The guard, however, is more than a name; he has no blunderbusses which were never loaded, but he guards you in earnest by locking you in your dens, to escape through the stanchioned windows as you best can, in the event of any sudden illness, blowing up, or more sudden conflagration.

You may, indeed, benefit your lungs by screaming after him, but, rushing after a hundred others in the like durance, he has small time for you, and his courtesy is a proverb.

A fiery energy, to which that of the Titan lying with Mount Etna thrown upon his shoulders was as nothing, is concentrated beneath those devoted-looking carriages—an energy which is driven on to do one of two things—to impel onwards the engine-work until time and space are reduced to the shadows and nonentities they are, or, unless carefully fed, restrained, and petted, like a spoiled child, at each station, to shiver you into minced meat, ere half your journey be over.

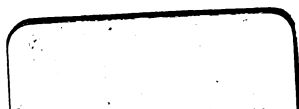
Meanwhile, the beautiful face of Nature, like the once noble and enlarged features of the savage, are lined, and begrimed, and tattooed, until the original outlines are obscured or lost.

Daily and hourly over their fairest portions the trains rush on, throwing up clouds of nauseous breath, and uttering divers screams, or shrieks, and deep pantings, thick and fast, as if drawn from the breasts of a hundred lions. And there they go, cleaving and tearing on their way through the rolling and changeful landscapes; looking like blind and shapeless antediluvian monsters, bringing terror with them, and leaving desolation behind.

Not that railways have created solitude. So entirely is it the reverse, that a kind of smirking existence is hatched, as it were, and grows up under, or rather within their immediate wings. Life and population pursue their trace, they adhere to their sides, even as the cottages ascend half way up the sides of Vesuvius, being built of the lava which destroyed them. Tawdry, flaring cottages or small miniature hamlets gather silently round every



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from his den, well satisfied with the things that be. The elder one follows him, looks at the substitute of the old house that was, shakes his head, and receives the shadow for that which once was real.

Yet, reticulated as are the fair lands of England, there are certain portions of them, by-ways from trodden paths, which are unreachd, untrenched on still, and which from necessity must so remain.

In one of these haunts of seclusion, the scenes of our record are chiefly laid.

At no measureless distance from the good town of Scarborough, certain portions of land extend, which are formed chiefly of sandy or alluvial soil, with which the farmer can do little or nothing. The speculator, while passing by them, has often cast his eye over their wastes with a future "looming" in view,—we use the phrase of an imaginative statesman—and, after a "pish!" and a "pshaw!"

has turned discontentedly away. The pioneers who prepare the paths for fashionable watering places have looked over it, also, and, after hungry inquiries and incisive questionings as to drainage, air, and water, voted the place and the situation alike impracticable—and so they “left it alone in its glory.”

And, in truth, the aspect of the country, as presented from the distance, was forbidding in the extreme to the eyes of the casual observer.

A long flat waste of dry and arid-looking fields occupied a wide extent of space; they were intersected thinly by stunted hedges of a brownish green, slightly overtopped by dwarf trees, which were chiefly willows. The whole aspect of the landscape, especially when lying under a grey and leaden sky, wore an unhealthy and bilious appearance. The face of Nature had a peevish and

discontented look, as if she were sick of herself, and slowly and sullenly dying of spleen and ennui—such a look as is frequently noticeable on the brow of the dwarf, or of those who are deformed, or stunted of their natural development.

Now, if the reader will use our eyes, he will discern, at the extremity of this waste landscape, bordering on the far sea which bounded it, a castellated house, wearing rather the appearance of a deserted fortress than a habitable mansion. It stands alone, and apart from a scanty hamlet which may be discerned in its immediate vicinity, looking grey and desolate. On a nearer approach, the aspect of desolation becomes more pronounced.

The building is composed of two huge square towers, which project on either side from the curtaining wall connecting them; they are pierced, also, with the usual loop-holes.

The walls and towers are battlemented, but the casements of the present age, ranged along the frontage, convey to it a modern aspect. Each casement also has its balcony ; each filled alike with the choicest flowers. The lower range of these casements opened on a long and noble terrace, flanked on either side by the rusticated basements of the towers. Descending a flight of steps, guiding from the central part, its banisters entwined with flowers, it opened upon a garden of rare beauty, which seemed to lie in the repose of the shadow and shelter of the mansion. It was of ample space, engirded with shrubberies, and they bounded by an invisible railing, which enclosed it from the open country. If the aspect of that country beyond was wild and savage, the garden-land of beauty was made the more striking from its excess of contrast. It was a veritable oasis in the desert, created by

art, wherein the very quality of the soil, and Nature herself, was changed.

The central portion of the garden had been laid out with that exquisite taste which is essentially of English growth, and unrivalled. The turf was opened in parterres of flowers, glowing in their rich beds of earth. There also were scattered at intervals artificial flower-baskets, looking as if they had been dropped there by Flora in her haste, to be reclaimed at her leisure. We speak of the garden in the past tense; what it had been was discoverable, but neglect had left it itself, and the results were painfully manifest. A neglected garden is the next melancholy spectacle to a neglected mind; from the hour that the hand of culture and art is withdrawn, Nature appears on the watch to reclaim her own; weeds, and waste, and unfruitfulness prevail.

But the noticeable character of this noble-looking mansion and its occupant most appeared when turning to the beach,—it was like turning from a scene of comparative paradise to a place of purgatory.

Immediately fronting the building and the sea, an ample area was enclosed by low granite walls, and surmounted by a rail of iron, which extended to the base of either tower. The centre of the outer wall, facing the sea, was marked by a massive iron door, knobbed heavily with brazen bosses. The area had been a garden also, for amidst heaps of sand drifting half way up the sides of the walls, long grass, wild flowers, and huge daisies pertinaciously protruded themselves. The sand, half burying its walls, had drifted also against the square towers, enveloping their basements, and, banking

along the curtaining wall, half hid its lower range of casements, which were shuttered and stanchioned with rods of iron.

While contemplating this scene of desolation from the shore below, it became clear to the most ordinary observer that the waste and the savagery of neglect were permitted by design. The upper range of casements was not only scrupulously tended, but the balconies were filled with plants of rare value, and most carefully preserved. The effect of the whole was that he who, on pedestrian thought intent, happened to reach that solitary mansion, generally took up his station on the pebbled beach, regarding it with a puzzled expression. He thus remained standing for awhile, as fixed as a sign-post, and as immovable as the mansion itself. But this was little marvel; it had risen before him frowning from a distance and repellent, and when neared

it assumed the aspect of the Sphinx in the desert—a riddle and a guess. He who stood before it with open eyes and mouth was sure to return home with the vague intelligence that he had met a sight worth looking at.

CHAPTER II.

For there I felt the sadness and the weariness of heart,
Contemplating life's hollow shows, in which I bore no part,
The faith that deadened, love that chilled, the hope that
all had tried,

Convention's lie, hate's jaundiced eye, hypocrisy and pride.

Lines upon Douling Sheep-Slate.

THE morning sun shone brightly on the mansion ; its light, softened and tempered by jealousies, entered into a stately apartment.

The noble room, with its richly groined ceiling and tapestried walls, was of octagonal form, and of the amplest dimensions. Carpeting of the richest tones and hues covered

the soundless floor. At intervals, over the tapestry, were hung Italian paintings of the rarest value. But the remarkable feature of the apartment consisted in the statues of the Four Winds, executed by a Venetian sculptor, as originally conceived as they were finely finished. There cowered the East, wrapping himself within his robes, the West, lightly casting them aside, the North, enveloped and shrinking within them, and the gay South, pointing to the light and joy—each alike was perfect in its expression. To crown the effects of the apartment, eight statues of Moorish figures, each holding forth a light, gave an excellent finish to each recess of the noble saloon.

The owner of this palace, for such it might be termed, reclined in a massive arm-chair, drawn up close to the casement which opened on the sea. A small ebony table was placed beside him, which was covered with papers

and manuscript. Nearly opposite to him was drawn a Venetian full-length mirror of magnificent dimensions. But the remarkable appearance of the individual would have drawn attention, whether it were in the palace or in the cottage.

The general character of his face was that of an excessive repose, cast over it like a film over deep waters, where all is still and quiet. His features were noble and regular; but if the eyes were lighted with a fire which was suppressed, the shadows of distrust, and something of weariness, rested on the ample forehead, whether caused by over-study or from the impression of some profound disappointment. The depressed lips, in the refinement of their curves, denoted also decision of purpose; while his eyes, under the shadow of projecting brows, in the depth and repose of their regard, intimated what their power might be when subdued by the influence of woman.

His age might have been something past the prime of manhood; he might, perhaps, have passed the fortieth milestone on the road of life. Additional discontent appeared to have gathered on his forehead while perusing the manuscript which lay open before him.

He threw it abruptly on the table, and, rising, stood before the mirror. The self-contemplation appeared still less satisfactory.

"Yes," he said in a tone of some bitterness, while soliloquizing aloud, a habit which long solitude had confirmed, "saws, such as I read there, sound well enough on the ear, and on the mind, and might, perhaps, be owned and felt, could I begin the course of life over again, without the weight of time, and the leaden collar of experience bound round my neck. Could such truths have been impressed within me then, their use would have been to me as chain-mail, preventing, or deadening, the face of many an assault. And yet," he

continued, half musing, "while looking at what that human frame-work has gone through, and how it has been shaken, I well nigh wonder that it looks even thus, or that anything but discords remain within it. Yes, the worst of all ills—the fatigue of the mind—has come over me. I feel and I know it. The milestones of the journey have been hurried too rapidly by, too freely and thoughtlessly. The knowledge and the endurance of life have taught me one truth—that wealth or money is the chief material god to which men and women bow alike—the only heartfelt worship. And I have acquired it. I turned aside from the broad roads of life; I entered on its by-paths and solitudes. I toiled and gave myself up to the one aim until I had succeeded in its fulfilment. It was an occupation, and I took refuge in it from a worse thing. And now that I have heaped it idly up, with whom have I to share it? Ay," he

muttered, turning towards the manuscript on the table "there lie confessions from my Book of Life; it is well that I wrote them down among things that had been, before the slow years reduced them to shadows and unrealities. But what induced me to record them? Here, in this Hall of Truth, alone and unheard, let me answer to myself. I endeavoured to sit in judgment on myself. I have called up the shadow of that which was, renewing every scene, reviving the joys and sorrows of every impression, magnifying each evil I wrought, and lessening the little good which I might have done. Who ever attempted the effort, nor was startled at himself?—nor recoiled before that which he found in his own breast, the triumphs, the disappointments, and the overthrows of the long past which were confessed only to ourselves? Were each man compelled to record his biography in the Temple of Truth, what history, novel, or essay would be

endured, so long as these revelations of life remained on the startled mind ? ”

A low knock, thrice repeated, on the door of the saloon, interrupted the monologue. The servant entered, presenting on a massive silver salver a letter with a mourning border ; but, ere the contents of the letter be revealed, we must turn aside to those by whom it was dictated ; gaining thereby a larger knowledge of the noticeable character we have left.

CHAPTER III.

He had probed our human nature, and its inmost foldings
 raised,
 Nor recoiled before the lazar of the heart on which he
 gazed:
 In confession of their weakness, he but saw and felt his
 own,
 Magnified by reinless impulse, good or evil overgrown.
 Our Youth, and How it Passed.

THE scene is now shifted to one of the most
 sombre parts of London, into the very heart of
 its dreariest abode, the sullen apartment of a
 lawyer looking out on the desolation of
 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

An elderly, busy old gentleman was sitting

before a table, which was heaped up, or rather deluged, with papers and documents. He appeared fussily occupied among them, pushing these aside with a "pish" and "pshaw," and filing others with looks of more approbation.

As the domicile indicates much of the inner man, we especially desire to dwell on that of Mr. Ralph Maliphant, as being, beyond a perhaps, the most noticeable in the Square. It might be called a lawyer's chamber gentlemanized, taking leave to coin a word for the occasion. The usual two or three threadbare, unhappy-looking chairs, to which the mental patient is invited—we use the term advisedly—were replaced by the genuine articles of solid mahogany, enlivened with maroon seatings. A handsome bronze stand, placed by the door, received the umbrella, and any cloakeries and cloggeries of pedestrians. The walls were soberly papered ;

and the usual grey-looking windows of such tenements, blindless and curtainless, looked spruce and gay, rejoicing in the investiture of both, and of virgin whiteness.

Glancing around the shelves, the yellow calf backs of many a huge folio denoted the patient searches of the Law after Justice, and the enormous labour required to find her at home. Above these shelves, like judges of the dead, the mistrustful head of Eldon frowned down, looking as if points of law still haunted him beyond the grave.

He, however, who had leisure or inclination to penetrate into the very recesses of Mr. Maliphan's sanctum might have darkly descried in the furthestmost niche of the room, as if placed there designedly, a small but very neatly-arranged glazed bookcase; from behind the clear windows of which, looked out the backs of numerous smaller volumes, rejoicing in gilt and newness. It was quite evident, from

their appearance, that the poet and the novelist had forced a passage into the dusty realms of law. Indeed, to place the matter beyond a doubt, the same bookcase was surmounted by statuettes of the eternal Shakespeare and Milton. On the lower shelf was seen the ardent and commanding head of Byron and the stolid brows of the one and mighty minstrel and novelist of the North.

Mr. Ralph was one of those short, stout little men, on whose open and honest faces Nature, by a stroke, conveys the character.

In many casts of the physiognomal mould there is no evasion. The whole map—and the whole truth of what he is and is not—is at once presented. The general character, or some overruling trait, is marked out at first sight, and is at once received.

The general, or rather the one, expression of Mr. Maliphan's face, with its apprehensive nose, inquisitive mouth, and surprised-looking

eyes, was that of one who, expecting to open the door of some well-furnished room, finds everything therein scattered at sixes and sevens, then, when the exact reverse was anticipated. His slightly elevated brows and his short grey hair, brushed sharply back from his temples, and standing up erect and apart, suggested the idea of a broom of the shortest possible bristles. Yet, in despite of a countenance where fussiness spake in every trait, with a desire to set everybody and everything to rights, the play of an unmistakable good humour, kindliness of nature, and the marked stamp of a gentleman, were diffused over the whole face ; while something like the smile of humour, latent, yet perceptible, played furtively along the eyelids.

The worthy old gentleman had evidently received some intelligence which, to adopt a conventional but unintelligible phrase, had "put him out." His mental lamentations

became audible :—" Coming to me this morning, is she ?" said he, putting down a small scented note. " Good gracious !—Well, but I didn't expect her, nevertheless. No, I really can't say that I at all expected her. An astonishing fact it is, how very little ladies—especially young ladies—with all their tact, know of a lawyer's habits in his private chambers ! Yet, how should they do so ?—she, especially, poor young lady, in her troubles ! She has other things to think of, Goodness knows.

" My stars," he continued, recurring to the papers, " she has given me something to do, though, and do it I will, I promise her. Questions and inquiries are here that ought to be sifted, fumigated, and ventilated to their very bottoms. And I am the very man for the work."

Through a long and honourable life, Mr. Ralph had prided himself on being an

eminently practical man; he had lived and fully acted up to his name.

No dust or cobweb ever found a moment's repose in the restless chambers of his mind; in a twinkling they were swept away. Placed on a different stage, he would have made a superb Chancellor of the Exchequer—gifted also with consistency of purpose.

He delved every question to its very roots, he allowed no tittle of evidence to escape him, and his surveillance extended as well to moral as to domestic life. If his cook, in some moment of laxer attention, sent up the cutlet not done to the turn, the bell commenced ringing, and never ceased until the culprit was bodily present in the room. The quality of the article and character of the seller, the attention given to it below stairs, were weighed alike by the finest cross-questioning, and when the fact was arrived at, that is to say, the truth, which was what he sought,

his features recovered their serenity and equilibrium.

"Yes," he continued, "Miss Constance Cleveland, charming young lady as she is, has really given me much to do for her. She is a ward in Chancery, and her affairs left in disorder by her father. Here are debts unpaid and heaps of them, arrangements respecting her guardianship unfinished, in fact, uncommenced, and all done, I do believe, on purpose to perplex me. To be sure," he added, correcting himself, "'tis the only thing in which my friend ever disappointed me; besides, he couldn't help dying,—none of us can.

"But what a request he has made me, (and myself to ask it of an entire stranger!) for I have never seen this Sir Reginald Mortimer, although I have corresponded with him. He was an old school-mate of my friend, but one, also, with whom he had had a mortal quarrel, a woman, of course, being at the bottom of

it,—“*dux femina facti*,” muttered the old gentleman,—“it was always so, from Helen of Troy downwards. And yet ‘he hopes and trusts,’—so he has it here in his will—and so he believed—that Sir Reginald Mortimer will protect, and become the guardian of his daughter, whom he has never seen, and of whose existence he is ignorant. Such things have been done no doubt”—throwing down the papers,—“but then I happen to know something of Sir Reginald’s remarkable character and position, which Miss Cleveland does not.

“Will he oblige the man, after his death, who was the object of his jealousy while living, and, as rumour added, the cause of his separation from his wife?—he who for nearly a quarter of a century has lived apart from the face of his fellow-men, buried among savage solitudes like a second Cain, with the mark on his forehead?”

A low tap was heard on the door of the sanctum. The head clerk of Mr. Maliphant appeared :—

“If you please, if you are disengaged, sir, Miss Constance Cleveland would desire to speak with you.”

“Goodness gracious!” exclaimed the old gentleman, throwing down the papers as if taken aback by the sudden announcement, although he had been chiding her delay during the last two hours. “My stars! Miss Constance, and I in my working coat, too—and no white stock! Charles, hand me down my coat. There—that’s it—God bless me!—only think—there—now I shall do,” he added nervously, pulling on the coat anyhow. “You see,” he added hastily, “she mustn’t be kept waiting. So very unpolite! Don’t you hear? Get out, and show her in, and I” (looking in a small mirror) “not even shaved—I got up in such a hurry! How I *do* wish that young

ladies would learn to come at the proper time to men of business !

“ My dear Miss Cleveland,” he added, stepping forward like a gentleman of the old school, and handing her to her chair, while his face lighted up with respect and sympathy, “ I hope that I see you comparatively well. Pray let me hand you to a seat ; compose yourself, and permit me to talk over your affairs.”

The appearance of Miss Constance fully warranted and justified all the good-will, if not the perturbation, of the worthy lawyer.

She entered his room with that air of easy quietude and conscious self-respect which casts, as it were, an atmosphere of its own round the presence of the genuine English lady—unobtrusive, yet self-possessed, unpretending, yet carrying unconscious pretension silently within her.

She received and returned the salutations of Mr. Maliphant with an open cordiality.

Miss Cleveland would have ranked among the first order of fine forms, which was sufficiently manifested, although clad in the deepest weeds of mourning for her father. The expression of her regular and open features was that of confiding trust, which enhanced the beauty of her face. Her eyes were lighted with a naturally joyous expression, now tempered and subdued; they were shadowed by dark eyebrows and veiling lashes. A character of persuasion dwelt on her countenance, which was seconded by a manner whose tones were in harmony.

She might have been somewhat past the first purple prime and freshness of youth, and entered on full womanhood.

If we ventured to speak closer to the point on that most uncertain and delicate of all human points—the age of a woman—we

would rather make use of the words of a veteran friend :—

“ That all who wish to wed or wive
Should look on Thrals at thirty-five.”*

We would wish to add, in a somewhat hesitating and disavowing tone, that she might not have passed the number of that mile-stone, but perhaps she was within the distance of a mile or two from it.

“ My dear Miss Constance,” he began, “ the affairs of your good father—my old and lamented friend—are so involved that they require a thorough fustigating, fumigating, and ventilating process, to see through, or rather into them. I mean to arrive at the whole and sole truth respecting the extent of his involvements. Your poor father, you see” (turning over the papers), “ like so many other unreflecting and foolish men—forgive me the expression—put off the setting

* Samuel Johnson.

his house in order until it was too late. If there be one worldly reflection that should be more impressed on the mind than another, it is that everyone should make a Will while he is in sound mind and can do so. For what are we but atoms floating on a sea of hourly uncertainties, into which the strong and weak sink alike? While, then, the pulse is steady, while the mind is clear, while the affections are unbiassed and unclouded, let the living man remember those who must come after him; let him reflect that he can take away nothing with him; (how many would do so if they could!) that he benefits the living while in the grave. To forget this last obligation ere passing away from the scene, to omit this good—I will call it by a higher term, this *great* action—is to fail in one of the most absolute of human virtues. Hitherto, among his papers I find nothing but memoranda of debts incurred,

with no possible means of their redemption : of shares taken up when all else threw them down. I am persuaded, my dear lady, that he foresaw all this ; perhaps he secretly felt, being in delicate health, that he should not live to make his way through them.

“ It must be confessed that he was wanting in that surest proof of moral courage—he did not dare to look at his position steadfastly ; had he done so, difficulties had vanished into mists ; they alway do so when confronted by determined purpose. What is the result ? The request made to me that I, the surviving trustee, make the appeal to Sir Reginald Mortimer, that he shall act as guardian to yourself during the interval caused ere the winding up of his affairs.”

“ But, my dear sir,” exclaimed Miss Cleveland, with a voice agitated by emotion, “ Sir Reginald is a stranger to me. Beyond certain noble traits of character, to which I have

heard my father bear testimony, I know nothing ; nor have I ever seen him."

"So much the better, Miss Constance! I am glad of it. The effect of your presence, and his recollections, will be more pronounced when you appear. You will not present yourself alone; you will go to him accompanied by a female companion."

"But do you not perceive," interrupted Constance, "that I am placed in a state of dependency, setting aside the stranger?—"

"Excuse me for my interruption, in endeavouring to weaken, and I trust destroy, an impression which is undue. In the course of a year, perhaps in a less period, I will prove to him that your affairs will be in such a position as to meet and cancel all obligations. Why, if any obligation exist, it proceeds from yourself. I retract the expression altogether. Sir Reginald Mortimer lives in a state of absolute solitude, on a sea coast

as wild and as desolate as can possibly be imagined."

"I have recently heard," observed Constance with hesitation, "that Sir Reginald Mortimer has been married,—is it so, if I may be allowed to ask the question?"

"Married? — yes — good gracious!" exclaimed the old gentleman, looking excessively perplexed and fidgeted. "Married? Why, of course he is, or, rather, has been; it is all the same thing; the past tense follows the present close enough in such matters. He *was* married, at any rate," reiterated the lawyer, beginning to steady and arrange his ideas on the subject: "most people do marry once in their lives, yet—"

"My dear sir," said Constance gravely, "I do not require any explanation; I have no right to do so. I desired to know if his wife were living or dead?"

"A wife living?"—re-echoed the old gentle-

man ; “ why, my dear lady, dead of course—dead, ages ago. I can’t exactly date the time, or how, or when, or where, it happened ; but that he is a widower, and has been during many years, all the world know ; of that fact I have testimony.”

“ Surely,” observed Constance, with a grave sweetness in her manner, “ you must well know the character of him to whom my father has committed my guardianship, ere you would advise its acceptance ? ”

“ My dear Miss Constance, I know everything, I do assure you, and everybody. I have fumigated, fustigated, and ventilated the entire subject, sad and dark as were some of its details. Sir Reginald Mortimer is a widower. His wife died ere the end of the first year, and, as I have understood, from natural causes.”

“ Was she of family, and equal to his own ? ” inquired Constance, “ accomplished

or beautiful? I ask not from curiosity, but because I have heard my father say that Sir Reginald Mortimer was the most fastidious of men."

"I saw her, but only once, within a week after the marriage, when they were living in the full tide of London society. She was indeed a beautiful lady; if you will permit me to say it, beyond the present company, I have rarely seen her equal."

Constance did not hear the compliment.

"Unfortunate lady, to die thus, and in her opening life! He must have felt her loss acutely."

The old gentleman felt relieved that the immediate cross-questionings of his client extended no further. He answered hurriedly,—

"Yes, certainly he did. As a proof of it, he abruptly retired from the society of which they had for a while formed the brightest ornaments. He left London and chose his

home among the wildest retreats of Lancashire. There he resides, buried within the fairy palace which he has created. I do not enlarge on the character of Sir Reginald, because I know so little of him since his retirement. I only know that such a character is in the very position to listen to my appeal, when raised in the behalf of a once valued and bosom friend. He is a recluse; but I have heard that on occasions he can come forth and assume the habits of the men of the world. I have heard it asserted, among other ridiculous reports which an eccentric life always engenders, that he is a miser; if so, he must be a refined one. One of those perhaps, and there are many such in life, who, having proved the value of wealth, attach to it an undue importance. His earlier life having been one of lavish extravagance, he may now have formed the just estimate. And now let us return to three chief points that must be accomplished.

It was your father's last request to me, therefore sacred, that I should make this appeal to Sir Reginald Mortimer."

The earnestness of Mr. Maliphan, and his affectionate regard, made an impression on Miss Cleveland.

She rose from her seat and took his hand, while the tears gathered thickly in her eyes:—

"I indeed acknowledge your kind words and advice. I see that I must take this step, and I take it willingly. It was my father's last request, and could only be fulfilled. Into your hands, then, I commit the cause of the orphan, and who could better state my position," she added, while rising, "than he who was my father's truest friend?"

The old gentleman hastily rose to lead her to the door. Gently, but respectfully, he took her hand, while addressing her with the expression of earnest interest:—

"My dear Miss Cleveland, lawyers are un-

habituated to express their better sentiments, simply because they are compelled to suppress them. I know that I have not outlived mine, and that knowledge is sufficient for me. For the rest, the devotional interest which I have in your cause will make my appeal successful."

"Yet," she added, while pausing at the door, "let not the style of your letter be too independent, or the reverse. Let the story be told in that natural manner which carries conviction with it."

"Miss Constance," replied the old gentleman, "you cannot know how earnest I am in the cause. Imagine me," he added, in a more cheering tone, "that is to say, if you can do so, as one of the knights of old, for, after all, lawyers *are* the knights who ought to be most dear in ladies' eyes; but, alas! the romance of danger is wanting. His lance is his pen, and his shield of seven-fold parchment is his knowledge. He, too, sallies forth and overthrows

the oppressor of the damsel and the doer of the wrong ; but his victory is silent and bloodless. In one result he materially differs from the armed knight ; instead of bringing to his fair expectant the severed head of her enemy dangling gracefully from his saddle-bow, beside his reeking battle-axe, he more frequently presents her with an offering, I imagine, far more acceptable—a carefully-framed marriage settlement and a purse full of money.”

CHAPTER IV.

They
Have won with false dice. Who hath been our Judas?
Marino Faliero.

THE scene of our record is now transferred from the close and crowded purlieus of Lincoln's Inn Fields, from the dun and misty atmosphere of London, to that portion of wild and open shore that extends along the easternmost coast of Lancashire.

Immediately below the low rocky ridge which was crowned by the castellated mansion of Sir Reginald Mortimer, a long waste beach

extended eastward as far as the eye could reach, where mist and distance closed the scene. To the westward, commencing from the vicinity of the castle, the aspect of the shore suddenly changed and assumed a wilder and more picturesque character.

Long low ridges of rock, outrunning from the cliff, advanced far into the waters, leaving numerous creeks and pools behind them. Among and beside these, huge boulder-stones were confusedly thrown—masses of rock that might have been left there by the deluge, or which might have toppled from the heights during some night of fear. In their wild and savage appearance they added an impressive character to the shore.

Receding some slight distance from the beach, the castle crowned a lower ridge of rock, from which the eye, following the windings of the shore, rested on the extreme headland terminating it, that shot forth into the

sea, and which was named "Morte Point." It probably gained its funest appellation from some unfortunate French vessel which might have been wrecked thereon in other days.

The promontory terminated the half-circling coast. Close on its extreme point arose what appeared to be a low fortalice, a solitary building in the shape of a low, grey, square tower, thus terminating the view in the distance with a picturesque effect.

Retrograding to the crags and boulders scattered along the shore in the more immediate vicinity of the castle, the grey cottage of a fisherman, strongly built, might be discerned among them, rising against the lower ledge of the cliff, and just without the reach of the highest spring-tides.

The tone of colour of the tenement so exactly assimilated with the face of the walled rock behind it that an unobservant passer-by, while

wandering along the beach, might easily have overlooked it, confusing one with the other.

It stood too closely under the cliff to be perceived from any distance, while it embraced a full and open view of the castle and of the extreme western point.

In the days of more active contraband, it would have been voted an excellent coverture and retreat for smugglers, backed by the rock and hidden by huge boulder-stones, which entangled and confused the eye while threading their interstices in the distance.

In a word, it was a retreat which might have been converted into the very haunt of concealment. Even then, it was regarded by the preventive-men stationed along the coast with suspicious eyes ; a suspicion which attached itself to the whole sea-board for miles away. In consequence of some unaccountable and daring transactions of contraband suspected

to have taken place recently, but which could not be brought home to the actors, a larger preventive service was talked of, ending, like all dilatory resolutions, in talk. The evil, in the meanwhile, remained and widened; while a dozen men did nominal duty along a coast where five times their number were required for any effective purpose.

To give another stroke to the finishing of the picture of the localities of the cottage and the shore, it is necessary to add that, in a deep gorge formed by a rent of the cliff that rose behind the cot, a winding path led into a narrow glen. Some few habitations, consisting of squalid-looking hamlets, hung along its sides; they appeared as if they owed their existence and their preservation to the substantial dwelling on the sea-board.

It was a bright and ardent morning; the sea was flashing in the sunlight, and breaking along the yellow beach. The casement and

the door of the cottage were thrown open ; but we owe a particular description to the occupants of the lower chamber.

The family of the Gilmours were making preparation for the morning's meal, for the sun had risen above the water a full hour. The father, a grey-haired man, but strong in the locks of his age, was seated beside the oaken table, giving a last hand to the finish of a net. His large sinewy frame, hardened by a seafaring life, conveyed the impression of ponderous, rather than of elastic strength. His grave and stern, yet open, features conveyed the character of decision of purpose stamped within each line. The appearance of the man was rendered more noticeable from a length of beard, which, covering his breast, gave him a patriarchal appearance. Karl, his only son, sitting behind him, in deep occupation also on his nets, formed an extreme contrast to the father. He had inherited from him the same

large development, combined with a stature which might have been termed gigantic.

But there the breed of the lion appeared to end. In despite of his constant exposure to all weathers and seasons, his complexion remained fair almost to a feminine tone, assorting well with a profusion of light hair, that fell above his shoulders. His forehead was broad and open, but the expression of the whole of the lower part of the face was indecisive and feline. At the first glance, he looked above his station; but on a closer view the impression was removed. A certain tone of sullen independence predominated in his countenance, and a want of openness in his regard was rather felt than expressed.

But the appearance of the matron still more fixed the attention which she would have commanded alike in the street as in the desert. It was one of those faces and figures which would have been selected by the genuine

artist or poet as a model for Jael. It would have been difficult to imagine features in which decision of will and the expression of a fixed purpose were more unmistakably stamped.

Pale, calm, and looking self-possession, with nothing of sternness, far less of cruelty, impressed on its open lineaments, the face was one on which, having looked, confidence would pause, ere reposing trust.

A reserved thought appeared to sit behind it, as behind a mask ; but whether for good or for evil, was doubtful. There was that in her eyes which arrested vagueness and indecision ; as one on whom trifling or idle talk would be thrown away.

She placed the last articles for breakfast on the table, and then took the chair opposite to her husband.

"Well, dame," he said, throwing his net on the floor, while turning to the board, "the

water looks calm enough this morning. Karl and I must be afloat soon, and we must do something to-day, dame, for, somehow or other, of late, little of what I call our usual luck has been with us,—the black cloud seems rising again upon us.”

“Luke Gilmour,” observed the dame, “that last word of yours was not well chosen, for you are no believer in luck; you know such talk is foolish, and that we make our own good and evil—we sow every seed of it, with our own blind eyes and our own obstinate hands.”

“Well, dame, the sparrow, we know, don’t fall—”

“Luke, the sparrow falls at her own time to fall. God don’t work miracles either for men or birds. He stands by and watches. Karl,” she added, turning abruptly to her son, while assuming the biblical phrase, as was her wont when earnest, “break thy fast at

once, and regard not thou our talk. See all is ready set for thee."

"Dame," said Gilmour, "I take the words of the Book as I find them written, and I read them as by a lamp, with the common sense that God has given to me, for I never gave it to myself. The fall of the sparrow, and our fall or failure of last week in landing the tubs, were pieces of the same chain—forged by us, it may be, but on this last work,—mark me,—I don't find out the workman. No—I have not yet found my way through it," he continued gloomily, while leaning his elbow on the table. "We were surprised, chased, all but taken, everything was sunk and lost. We had chosen the darkest night and morning; they could'nt have been better, if they had been made for us; yet we found the gauger and his crew all ready for us, waiting on the very place we had fixed on,—and who could have told them? I had

hardly time to claw off shore; when Derrick's cutter was down upon us, and, but for the master coming between, and firing right into them, we had not now been sitting here to talk on't."

"Even so; and, Luke," said the dame sadly, rather than sternly, "deeds done beget their like. We deceive others, and we are deceived, and then we are wroth, and our countenances are fallen. We sow fruits forbidden; they are sown and thrown upon the waters, and whenever did such things go on, nor a bird of the air carry the matter? We cast not bread upon the waters, but we cast unlawfulness, and the tares of such harvests are certain."

"The things were to be done, dame; of that be sure, for they are done; but how the gauger Derrick, who hath sworn to ruin us if he can, could guess the hour of our return from across the water, passes my thought. I can't see my way through. There is a serpent

somewhere in the grass, and I can't crush him,"—(and the smuggler, leaning on the table, relapsed into thought.)

A pause for awhile ensued, interrupted by neither. The dame made no reply, but the silence was interrupted by Karl. Relinquishing the net over which he had been occupied, he raised his head, and, glancing first at his mother, began,—

"Father, there is a word or two, if I might say it."

"Speak out, son Karl," said the smuggler, turning, and regarding him complacently; "let us hear what thou hast to say."

"The master, in coming between the boats, on that last night, ran us in too close on the shore. In his attempt to dodge off Derrick's cutter, he well-nigh sank himself and us. We were bound to lighten her of everything, or she would have gone down."

The father attentively regarded his son.

“Karl, when thou canst hand, reef, and steer, and can’st manage sail and helm like the Master of Morte, I will give to thee the guidance of our boat, ay, in the darkest night and water, of that I promise thee. Too close, say’st thou?—why, the master handles his boat as well—ay, as well as myself, and, it may be, a thought better—for when was Luke Gilmour afraid of the truth? I couldn’t have handled her better—I say it out. It was the closest thing I have seen done on the water—ay, and the boldest, too, for, as to the volley he poured in, ’twas just a sham to draw them off, to anger and put down judgment, and it succeeded when nothing else would have done.”

“They ran after him, as he meant they should do, and we were saved just when the gauger’s grip was on our shoulder.”

“Do thou remember, Karl, my son,” the father added, gravely regarding him, “to do

unto thy neighbour as thou wouldst he should do unto thee."

Karl made no reply to the reproof of his father, but, although his head was bent over his work until he nearly touched it, he could not hide the crimson forehead, with its enlarged veins, and the expression of a face that had changed its character.

"Ay," muttered the dame to herself, "evil doings will bring their fruitage, slow but certain. Sinful we are, Luke, cloak the truth, how thou wilt, from thyself. 'Tis a strife, I tell thee," said the dame, raising her voice and finger in warning, "against the law,—against law such as it is,—I say nothing of its justice—but its power. It is a strife—mark me well—that shall, on some coming day, end in violence, and blood, and death."

"The gauger mortally hates us, dame, and thou knowest the cause."

"I'm well-nigh weary of the goings on among us," observed the dame, evading his remark. "I would that they were ended, that we had again the peace that we have lost."

"And the master, yonder, seems to be of the same mind, dame, as thyself. He has lain close to the point, there, full seven days.—I haven't known him do the like."

The smuggler, raising his glass, pointed it toward the promontory. He then lowered it with a hasty exclamation:—

"No, dame, he is waking from his sleep. I see a bit of bunting fluttering at the head of his boat—he will be down among us in half an hour."

He then casually turned his glass upon the castle in the distance.

"Why, dame," he added, in a lower tone, "this is no common morning. If we have been sleeping in our cabins, the master of the castle yonder appears to be wide awake.

There are his casements opened to the light that I thought were closed for doomsday. What do they say about it among the cottages behind us, dame?"

Dame Gilmour, instead of making reply, gazed earnestly towards the castle.

"Perhaps he is coming down among us, at last," continued Luke, "to let us know that he is made of flesh and blood, like ourselves."

"Has Pearl been downstairs yet?" inquired the dame abruptly. "No?—then Karl, put down thy nets, mount the staircase quietly, and just tap at her door. She has passed her usual time."

Karl bounded to his feet, and was at the foot of the narrow staircase.

"Yet, no," added the matron, motioning him to stay.

"Pearl is as changeable and wayward as the sea. I verily believe that she draws much

of her nature from it. She seems to change with its changes, for she is never the same for two days or two hours together."

Luke Gilmour regarded his helpmate.

"What you say of her, dame, may be true, but of another truth I am more sure—that she is the rainbow of the dwelling. I never feel the like comfort in looking on her as when the squalls and weather are darkest round us. No," said he, returning to his nets, "I seem as if no harm could touch us while she is here."

The dame made no reply. She slowly ascended the narrow staircase. She then tapped on, and silently opened the door of Pearl's bedchamber.

CHAPTER V.

She more resembles Nature when the eve
Folds her soft vesture round her ; when the stars
Shed rays on her half-visionary face ;
Meeting of sobered lights and gentlest hues,
And twilight harmonies without a name.

The Deluge.

THE little apartment which she entered was an example that the plainest and most unadorned chamber may illustrate the character of its occupant as truly as the most gorgeous. The plain deal-planked flooring shone in its cleanliness, and the clear white-washed walls conveyed the impression of coolness. A small

tent-bedstead was drawn up in the furthest corner fronting the light, looking, with its white curtains folding over it, as pure as the sheeted snow.

Similar curtains were festooned round the little latticed window that opened on the blue sea. The sole ornament of the room—if such it could be termed—was a plain crystal vase, which was filled with wild flowers, gathered from the hedge or field by the hands of Karl. Placed on the low and modest mantel-piece, they threw a faint odour round the room; the fresh, clear water sparkled round them, showing that they were tended with unusual care.

But the dame's eye was fixed on the remarkable-looking female, who, carelessly seated beside the window-sill, was looking out on the waters towards where Morte Point bounded the distant promontory. She appeared so absorbed in her reflections that she did not hear the entrance of the

dame. The noise of the sea was in her ear, and the wind filled the room.

Her averted head was resting on her hand, while her right arm, half uncovered, and of chiselled proportion, reposed on a small table drawn beside her. A piece of bunting, or signal cloth, was placed on it, as if the working on it had been for awhile suspended.

Her dark hair, naturally curling, fell over her shoulders, tossing lightly aside as the air entered the room.

"Pearl, my dear, the breakfast has long waited for you."

Pearl turned hastily round, revealing one of those faces which are rarely seen in our northern latitudes. The tint of her finely-formed face was deepened to a southern tone, and her dark eyes, lighted up with a joyous brilliancy, were veiled and subdued by their long, pencilled lashes.

A certain decision of character was graven round the beautifully curved lips, which was confirmed by the open forehead, denoting the calm self-possession of a concentrated will. The organization of health was developed as well in her cheek, and in the fulness of her clear and calm regard, as in her finely-formed figure.

"How good it was of you, dear mother, to come up to me yourself, when you might have sent Karl!"

"Pearl," said the dame, contemplating her with complacent regard, "I find you still looking out on the sea as if it were your own property, and as if you were the daughter of it; and verily," she added, "you are so, for you may be said to have been born and cradled beside it."

"Hush!" answered Pearl, rising, and playfully placing her finger on the matron's lips. "Let not such a bright and glad day be

overclouded by sad thoughts, or by the reflection of far-off remembrances."

"And yet," continued the dame, glancing at the bunting, as if inquiringly, "your thoughts seemed busy when I entered, though your hands were not. Your eyes were turned to the Point yonder, and, judging by your side face, the thought was an overcast one."

"The sound of the waters, mother, when we are alone, makes us silent and thoughtful."

"And inactive, too," said the dame, glancing at the table, whereon lay the piece of bunting, half finished, and tossed aside, as if forgotten.

"It seems as if you shared the idleness of the master, for I see his boat is again close moored up, and the casements of his tower are half closed—a sign that he is off his watch."

"After the last failure and danger, you know," observed Pearl, gravely, "too much

caution could scarcely be used. Eyes are watching daily, or rather hourly; and glasses are pointed from every height within miles of the neighbourhood."

"We can talk of such matters below, Pearl. How is it that, while your eyes can see everything, you overlook that which opens right before them? The saying along the hamlet is, that a visitor is expected at the castle. Look at the casements yonder, that are opened for the first time for many a long year!"

"Very likely," said Pearl, carelessly turning her head, while regarding the castle with indifference, "changes for the better come at last into every dwelling; it has arrived at ours; why should it not visit greater people?"

"But," replied the dame hastily, "Sir Reginald Mortimer has lived the life of a hermit there, full fifteen years, barring the interval of the master's arrival; and you could hardly call that a visit, seeing that he pre-

ferred the tower and the free shore to the tyrannies of his uncle."

"We should first be sure he used them," gravely replied Pearl. "The quarrels of eagles are confined to their own nests. He would be as careful of guarding the character of his uncle as his own. It had been happier, perhaps, for the master had no quarrel arisen between them. Both are said to be high spirits; it is little wonder, therefore, that such an alliance ended. Besides," she added, smiling, "in dwelling on the loneliness of the master of the mansion, are you not giving the best reason why he should open his doors?"

The dame, who had been regarding the castle with increased interest, suddenly interrupted her :—

"Pearl, if you will look at that which lies nearer to you than the Point, you will see that preparation is busy while we talk."

"Pearl looked towards it. The eyes of the

castle seemed opening in its windows. Workmen were employed on each of them; the curtains enfolding them were distinctly seen.

The grey building seemed to be awakening from lethargy into a state of reanimation.

"It is so, indeed," said Pearl, regarding the castle more earnestly. "I hope that his friend will cheer and enliven his solitude."

"Pearl," said the dame abruptly, "you appear to take an interest in that forbidding man who shuts himself up like a lion in his den, one you have never seen, for he has never yet come down to the shore."

"Perhaps it is," said Pearl smiling, "for a true woman's reason—because no one else does it. You tell me, you know, that I am wayward in all I do and say."

"But," said the dame, with increasing energy, while changing her mode of phrase in her earnestness, "hath he ever made himself one with the poor who dwell in the glen?"

Hath he ever been seen or met? The adder doth not more carefully avoid the haunts of man. Hath he ever gone beyond his pathway hewn along the ledge of cliff? There he is to be seen, standing or walking, at all hours of the morning or at night; like an evil spirit ill at rest, he seems to love the shadow and the storm better than the calm and the sunlight. .When hath he stretched forth his hand to the poor when disease struck down or the wreck of a boat hath ruined them?"—

Pearl interrupted her,—“Whenever they have turned to him, mother—let us be just.”

“So be it,” observed the dame, correcting herself; “he hath, indeed, sent down the crumbs from the table, but he hath never sought out poverty until she knocked at his door.”

“Perhaps so,” observed Pearl thoughtfully, “and there lies the error of the rich man. Therefore is it that the golden-laden camel

cannot enter through the eye of the needle, or, in plainer phrase, through the narrow gates of poverty."

"Pearl," said the dame, contemplating her with considerate regard, "confess to me, from whom you hide nothing, why you take up the cause of that half-savage man rather than condemn him?"

"I could hardly tell you myself; perhaps I could better show you," she said, turning to the casement. "Look at the cliffs along the shore; they are bound together like a band of brethren, while in their walled strength they count as nothing the onsets of the sea. Now, when the storm comes, that I love better than the sunshine, I hardly look at their sides while the mist and foam are flying up them, but I do look on yonder solitary crag. It stands in their front like a sentinel, and meets the shock and whole weight of the incoming waters. And then I

ask myself why do I regard that crag with interest?—and why do I love to see it, as it were, single-handed, still resist the sea? . And I feel the cause is that it meets the strife alone. It is even so with the master of the castle—he stands alone.”

“Well,” said the dame, “I may be answered—that is to say, after your own fashion of answering, Pearl—perhaps I am, but—”

“Besides,” added Pearl, gently interrupting her, “who can tell what cause it was that has driven him to live in such wild solitudes?”

Dame Gilmour abruptly interrupted her: “Whatever trials he may have gone through, they are coming to an end. The report in the village is that a lady is about to visit him, and preparations yonder seem less set up for man than woman.”

Pearl rose from her seat; her face, averted from the dame, was turned towards the castle.

“Indeed,” she added, carelessly, “perhaps

the report may be circulated by Sir Reginald Mortimer by design, as an attraction to draw back his nephew to him from his wilder course of life ; or it may be, perhaps, to show him that he can find others to fill the position which the master abandoned."

"Happier for him, perhaps, if he had done so," said the dame, thoughtfully, "and why?—that quarrel caused a change in our life. Until then we were fishers on the shore, with barely sufficient for our subsistence, and now—"

"And now we are—" added Pearl, hesitatingly, seeing that the dame paused.

"Speak out the word boldly, before God and man," said the dame, calmly regarding her, "Now we are—smugglers! *I* am not ashamed"—laying emphasis on the word—"of thus earning our daily bread. I rather glory in the occupation, though I confess it not to Luke, lest he become too unrestrained. Our life had been that which the life of poverty

ever is, and must be—a struggle, and in this state,” continued the dame, her colour mounting as she spoke, “a worser thing befell us,—we were persecuted by the gauger Derrick, who dared to look at yourself. It was then that the master came on the shore, and, at the eleventh hour, opened to us the pathway to a securer life.”

“We cannot well be too grateful to him,” observed Pearl with an abstracted manner. “Yet there are times when I wish—”

“Ay,” said the dame, “that we could have gone on our way like others around us, but I felt that something more must be won to mend our prospects for the future.”

Pearl made no reply.

“Let us go,” she said, turning towards the door.

“I see,” observed the dame, looking outward, “that the shutters of the tower are lowered; the master’s boat is slowly turning

round to the frontward of the Point. He will be here, then, in less than half an hour."

Pearl heard, but made no comment, as she followed the matron slowly down the narrow staircase.

Luke Gilmour, on seeing her, arose from beside the table.

"The blessing of the day be with you, Pearl," said he. "You seem to bring light alongside of you into the room. Karl, empty that chair and place it beside her."

Karl bounded from his seat, and placed the chair for her with a deference that might have been paid to a queen. And in such fashion Pearl received it, with indifference, as something that had become her natural due, which was expected and familiar. As she sat beside the oaken table, her contrast to those around her was remarkable. The bluff, bold aspect of the smuggler, and his stern, yet open front, entailed respect. Dame Gilmour, with a more

imposing presence, resembled the wife, or mother, of one of the patriarchs. Karl inherited his strength from his father ; but the reserve on his forehead was more pronounced than on that of his mother ; it was a face that might have been termed repellent from the distrust and reserve expressed in its every line. Each of the characters were more or less material.

Pearl sat among them as a being apart. In despite of the homeliness of her attire, noticeable only from its extreme neatness, it might be recognized at a glance that she was misplaced, and out of station. This impression was unconsciously confirmed by the deference paid by those around her, which had become habitual and uniform.

"The Pearl seems to bring good fortune downstairs with her," resumed the smuggler, his rugged features relapsing into something that resembled a smile, "for, at the same mo-

ment the eyes of the tower opened yonder, life begins to stir beside the master's boat."

"Perhaps," said Pearl smiling, "he has discovered the beauty of the day. You know that he does everything unlike other men."

"I hope," observed Gilmour, while returning to his nets, "that he has no ill-will against me for our last mishap, in sinking and in losing the best part of the cargo. I did all that a seaman could do for it; that I will say; but there was a spell against us; it was decreed to be."

"The working of the spell," observed the dame, "was from the gauger."

"I tell thee, dame," said the smuggler, "I have thought of it and dreamed of it, and, now the master comes, we will try to find out the truth."

"Father," said Pearl, "whatever faults the master has, nor distrust nor treachery is among them; let the subject come from him."

The smuggler was about to reply, when, at that moment, a long shrill whistle was heard from the water. The keel of a boat grated on the pebbled beach ; steps hastily advanced, and the Master of Morte abruptly entered the cottage.

CHAPTER VI.

A noticeable man, in whom thought dwells :
It looks out from his brow, while the fixed will,
And something of a cynic bitterness,
Plays round his lips ; the light in his clear eye
The weaker mind would choose its polar star.

Life's Episode.

THE appearance of Lionel Mortimer was remarkable, as forming an extreme contrast to each of the inmates. The paleness of his features was rendered more noticeable from a profusion of the lightest hair. It has been noted, in either sex, that light hair is often found to denote a certain laxity of will or

purpose, and in man, effeminacy ; when the exception to the law occurs, it is rare. Thus it was in that of the Master of Morte, as he was generally styled along the sea-board.

The expression of his enlarged and regular features was enhanced by an expansive forehead. The mouth was well formed and firmly set ; but the countenance drew its fullest character from his penetrating eyes, marking from pronounced brows the resolve of determined purpose. His form, somewhat below the average height, was sinewy and elastic, rather than powerful.

The facial materialism, if it may so be termed, or mixture of white and red that marks the ordinary Anglo-Saxon face, and denotes the absence of character, was wanting in him.

On an extreme pallor of face and forehead an air of fatigue was visibly impressed.

It was the expression of a mind that had tried and proved all. The steadfastness of his regard showed an entire self-possession, as one who withheld his thought while calculating on the mind he was addressing. If youth was manifested in the elastic frame, and on the unlined face and brows, the experience of a life seemed to sit there, also, and to mellow its greenness with the touches of time and experience. He entered with the careless ease of one who was conscious of his welcome. He saluted the dame and the smuggler with that manner which gives the ease it feels; and, lightly inclining to Pearl, who received the salutation as one born to it, he took the seat which Karl had relinquished on his appearance, retiring to the recess of the room, as if he had not noticed his entrance.

“Well, Gilmour, my brave heart,” began the master, cheerily, “you know why we have been

lying close during the last weeks ? It was high time while the hawks were abroad, when every creek and cranny of the shore, for miles round, has been watched by eyes as keen as foxes over rabbit-holes. Yet we have foiled the gauger nevertheless. I knew that the red bands bound round the bows of the boats, and the changed canvas, would have puzzled clearer heads than theirs; in case of any sudden search they are carefully stowed away ? ” he suddenly added inquiringly.

“ Let the master be sure of that,” replied Gilmour, “ but I hope he gives no blame to me for sinking the cargo and clapping on all sail to get away. The gauger’s hands were at our throats, and what with baling out and heaving overboard, but for you coming between us, we had been either taken, or safe in Davy’s locker. As it was, Derrick hailed us, thinking we were going down ; but we were too wise to

be gulled. Had he heard our tongues, our secret would have been out."

"Say no more, stout heart! say no more. Your boat is too heavy, though; you must lighten her. Until then, the gauger could catch you at any hour. If I had not fired a shot or two, and ran right between, I doubt if we had been talking it over, as now."

Pearl raised her eyes from the bunting which she held in her hands; she looked calmly at the master:—

"What then would have been the result?"

"Why," he answered carelessly, "we must either have sunk the boat of the gauger, or sunk ourselves. Less we could have not done, unless we suffered ourselves to be taken; and that last clause," added he, glancing at the smuggler, "I would not have allowed."

"How would you have prevented it?" continued Pearl, gazing on him, as if asking a question of indifference.

“Even as I did,” replied the master, his pale cheek suffusing, “and rather than that Gilmour had been taken by force or treachery, by the sky that is over us, I would have sunk the gauger’s boat and every man in her. They would have brought the evil on their own heads,” he added, with composure.

Pearl made no reply, but resumed the work before her. The matron took up the word:—

“The life of the Master of Morte must not be perilled for such as ourselves, who owe to him all that we have of independence—”

“Hold!” said the master hastily. “You owe to me less than nothing. All that I have done grew out of my own wishes. I drew Gilmour into them. Danger is to me excitement. I love the daring for its own sake—it is the food of my life. Therefore it was,” he added, carelessly, “I opened spiritual communications across the water. I saw your position here; that you wanted aids.

"Besides," added he, rapidly turning from a converse that wearied him, and to which, by a quicker glance, he saw that Pearl had heedfully listened, but with an abstracted air, "I love the sea and everything connected with it. The sight of the air above, the breath of its respirations, add to my happiness. I could not live apart from it. I love it in all its moods—most in its changes, for then I see myself reflected. I would not exchange that grey square tower yonder, with its yard or two of grassy turf in front, and the waters round it, for the stateliest palace on the face of the earth—for why?—because I and independence live there together."

While the master uttered these genuine confessions of character with a truth and earnestness that was manifest in each word, Pearl regarded him with attention.

He might have been, in those moments, a dangerous study for the eyes of a susceptible

young woman. Something of the old buried romance hung round him as he spoke. His frank, open bearing, a certain purpose stamped on his forehead, with the look of success that triumphs over obstacles, was manifest in each word. It was an ardour and enthusiasm that might have been shared by a comrade; but a dangerous study for one of the opposite sex.

Pearl manifested no corresponding emotion. Her dark eyes were earnestly fixed on him while he spoke, filled with that joyous light that seemed living within them; but their expression was veiled.

"The Pearl seems silent this morning," observed the master; "does she lay claim to second sight, which her father indulges in, until he makes the thing he sees, be it good or ill?"

"I think," said Pearl, "that by dwelling steadfastly on any character, we can calculate

much of what they are likely to do, but much more of what they have done, or could do, did they act up to their natures."

"Then," replied the master with animation, "I will turn to you as to a seer. Do you foretell my being taken? Shall I be lowered, or prostrated—and by such an agent as Derrick the gauger?"

"I forestall," answered Pearl, "that the master will be betrayed into no position unworthy of his character or station."

Lionel Mortimer slightly coloured.

"But there are other dangers," continued Pearl, as if she had not observed it, while passing from the subject, "into which man may be led, the easier, perhaps, from his having defied them. Has the master looked at the castle without perceiving signs of a coming change?"

"Why, ay," said he, glancing at its front, "change must touch the old castle like all

else. Nothing remains the same while time is always growing. Some human importation is, I see, about to break on the baronial solitude."

"Perhaps," said Pearl, "it may be a female to share it with him."

"It might be so," observed the master with indifference; "anyone, or anything, so I am relieved from being imprisoned within its walls."

"Or rather," observed Pearl, with hesitation, "it might be an endeavour to recall the master back to his home. It might be that some high-born dame is expected there whose attractions—"

"Would be none for me," he replied carelessly. "My mistress is yonder sea, and the more changeful the more I love her."

"And now," he added, gaily, "I am to hold a council of war, over which you shall especially preside,"—turning towards Pearl, the

colour slightly tinging his cheek,—“that is to say, if you will descend from your state to do so. The bravest deeds of the knight-errants of old were planned in the company and under the bright eyes of woman.”

“Such councils are better held in their absence,” observed Pearl, slowly rising.

“I feel that women should be the counsellors against dangers, not the abettors,” and, inclining towards him gracefully, yet with something of reserve in her manner, she left the room.

The master followed her with his eyes to the door, but suppressed any sign of emotion.

“Gilmour,” he abruptly said, turning to the table, “I have that to propose which will trebly cover the misadventure.”

“But I hope the master has seen—” observed the smuggler, in a deprecatory tone—

“Not a word further; the loss and the

danger were yours. That there is a spy somewhere near us, a Judas or an eaves-dropper, I believe; our next venture shall better prove it—listen!”

In the meanwhile, Karl, who was stationed in the remote corner of the room, became heedful as one of the council; but he continued his occupation.

The smuggler leaned forward on the table, his eyes riveted on the master, who continued:—

“I waited off yonder till I saw the watch over us was a thought less keen; meanwhile, I have sent across the water.

“On the last night of the month I shall pass over, returning with as choice a venture and boat-load as ever left their port. The red bands and the canvas must be especially looked to; they served us well, and will again. Now, let us consult as to our laying down the place for landing, and the points of observa-

tion which are the surest and most easily seen on a dark night."

They drew round the table, and, closing the door, arranged their purpose for the eventful night.

CHAPTER VII.

I make thee hold the mirror to thyself,
That tells thee what thou feelest in thy heart,
Yet darést not to confess; I point to thee
And say—Thou art the man!

Life's Episode.

ON hastily leaving the room of the cottage, where, a few moments previously, Karl had been stationed, unobserved, alone, but a silent and attentive listener, the master found him on the beach.

He was standing with his arms folded over his breast, leaning against the gunwale of his father's lugger. His cheek was ashy pale,

but his face wore a particular expression, that at once arrested, ere passing him, the eye of Lionel.

"I chose this place to have a word or two with the Master of Morte," he began, sullenly eyeing him like one whose purpose had scarcely concentrated itself into form.

"Speak," said Lionel, advancing towards him and fixing his eye full on him.

"In some words that passed in the house between my father and yourself, you hinted at my ignorance, and at something worse, as a seaman. Now I stand here to ask what have you to say against me? What did you mean?"

"What I said to your father, and what you have heard."

"And that was—"

"The truth—that I saw—what you know," replied Lionel, confronting the stern eyes that were at length averted from his own; "that

you would have given up yourself and the lugger on that night to the gauger; if I had not run between you and stopped the treachery, —ay, the treachery,” he added, “for if you will have the word out—hear it. I stopped you only by firing right into him, which, else, I should not have done. I did not choose to see my work destroyed, or a Judas Iscariot be paid his pieces of silver for betraying his own father.”

“I ask you again,” said Karl, “what do you mean?”—his visage changing and livid from concentrated passions.

The master, restrained, but not checked by the eyes that fastened on his own, replied :—

“This I mean, that I will allow no man to question my actions, or my secrets, if I choose to have them, least of all, yourself.”

“There is another secret,” said Karl, sourly smiling, while averting his eyes, “which is yet to come out, and when I know it, I may

tell you my own. Meanwhile, I warn you, question not a better seaman and a stronger man than yourself; and, mark me; if you enter yonder house, to sow the seeds of discord among us and to set one against the other, look out for a red harvest."

"Base churl!" exclaimed the master, the dark lightning rising in his eyes. "I have stood here too long. Now hear the truth, and ponder on it. It is because I do distrust you—more, because I know you, that I keep watch over yonder house. It is because I see and read through that ill-fitting mask which you wear over your face; it is because I am on my guard, that I more than guess at him who has twice betrayed us. Let him look to himself on the third time. It is because I know it to be the eleventh hour of danger that I am awake. And, by the Heaven that is above us, if I prove the secret on you I will open the eyes of those who trust you

but too well. I have spared you hitherto,—from henceforth I will throw such mercy to the winds!”

Karl appeared as if on the act of making a sudden and desperate onset, but the hand of the master slowly descended to the belt within his sea-cloak.

“From henceforth, I say, beware! Look to yourself, as I have done,—for, I swear, the Judas who is among us shall answer it with his heart’s best blood—be he the dwarf or the giant. And mark you further,” he shouted from the half-deck of the boat upon which he had sprung, “you have your rifle, and you know how to use it; I have mine. If you seek me out yonder, be it in the fair day, with sixty paces of sea-beach between us. Nearer than that you advance not, for the betrayer, if such he be proved, may also turn assassin.”

And thus speaking, while awaiting no reply from Karl, who stood beside the boat irreso-

lute and immovable, while struggling with contending emotions, the master drew in the oars of the cutter, and, throwing forth the jib, floated into deep water.

CHAPTER VIII.

Never yet woman lived,
Howe'er quick vanity hath phantasied,
Who fathomed half the inconsistencies
In the shut heart of man.

Life's Episode.

It was a beautiful autumnal morning, when Constance sat beside the windows of the noble saloon of the castle, which opened on the country.

A far-spread landscape, occasionally rich, but diversified with moor, and fen, and sandy plain, extended to a long low ridge of hills. Beneath the window, the ample terrace opened

along the front of the mansion, rounding the abutting towers. It was enclosed by a marble balustrade, upon which vases of orange-trees were arranged in long order. The centre of the platform was occupied by a *parterre*, filled with the choicest flowers, which threw a palpable light and joyousness around them. A broad flight of steps descending from it in the frontward, gave upon a mossy lawn, enclosed on either side by gigantic elms and sycamores, between whose intervals the mountain ash was conspicuously apparent. The lawn undulated towards a small lake which was seen winding a serpentine course along its edges. And there expanded forth one of those beautiful sheets of water, such as are found in England only, where art and imagination arrive to the perfection of throwing additional graces on the unkempt features of nature. Rising at intervals along the rich turf, the roses were drooping in their full beauty, and

flower-baskets were opened in the rich earth, as if dropped in haste by some wandering spirit.

Seated beside the window, Constance had hitherto paid little attention to the beauty without. The more strange and quaint forms and adornments round the saloon had arrested her attention. The walls were hung round with pieces of ancient tapestry in a state of full preservation. The different subjects were divided into separate compartments by waving scrolls of gilding, scarcely tarnished by the wear of many centuries. Each of these represented hunting-scenes; the figures, the woods, and the open country were admirably finished.

In one of these, a young huntsman, arrayed in the costume of the period, had just slain a wild boar, the headless body still reeking at his feet. He was represented in the act of offering the prize, on his knee, to two bright

ladies, evidently of high rank, clad in costume of the olden chivalrous time. Each of them was armed with a bow and quiver. One was in the act of receiving the tribute paid to her by the young huntsman ; while the other was plucking grapes from a vine overhead, as if to refresh him. A Cupid, flying laughingly above the group, significantly hinted at the crowning reward supposed to be in reserve for such acts of courage and devotion.

In the opposite compartment, the story of Actæon was given to the life. On the one side of the picture, the wood-nymphs, alarmed, were crowding round their queen, like rose-buds gathering around and concealing the crowning flower ; on the other the dogs had already torn down the unfortunate huntsman, who was represented as throwing up his arms in vain.

Each corner of the saloon was filled by marble copies of the four masterpieces of sculpture.

The group of the Laocoon was there, relieved and thrown out from the background of its crimson canopy, — the Apollo, the Venus, and the Moses of the great master. A few rare specimens of Vandyck were hung in the intervals of space between them. The marble chimney-piece, the elaborate work of Inigo Jones, was filled with the choicest flowers. Over it a large picture was suspended, but covered with a silken curtain; while on the wall opposite, a similar one, but of a smaller size, was veiled alike.

“And yet,” said Constance mentally, after a long survey of the treasures disposed round the room, and speaking, as if unconsciously, to herself, “I have already lived to find how little such adjuncts as these add to our happiness; or, rather, to our contentment. Nay, they more often appear a mockery; for when ill at ease with ourselves, their perfection and their state of repose contrast but the more

with the imperfection and infirmities of the mind. That real solitude which is talked of, rather than felt, is to be found only in mansions such as these. The thought can ask for nothing here, where all is forestalled. All is given even to profuseness; all but that society which is the healthful food of our life, without which health itself is disease. And yet, my guardian, this strange and remarkable man, has not yet hinted at the subject, and but for the presence and converse of my attendant, I might almost forget that I was woman, or the inhabitant of a living world."

She looked toward the veiled portrait.

"And probably beneath the curtain of that mysterious-looking picture the resemblance of that ill-starred lady is preserved, of whose story Mr. Maliphan knew too much, or would reveal too little. I look at it until I almost feel the woman's curiosity prevail, and that I am well inclined to draw that curtain aside."

CHAPTER IX.

I but drink
The cup of life to prove its weariness.
Why may I not again be that I was?
Life's Episode.

SHE had scarcely expressed the thought, when the door of the apartment suddenly opened and Sir Reginald Mortimer entered.

In advancing towards Constance with the salutations of the day, there was a depth and earnestness expressed in his regard, with that deference and courtesy of manner which is perhaps the most graceful form by which man acknowledges the influence and the ascendancy of woman.

"I perceive," he said, smiling, "that, without your having yet visited Italy, to be there taught to understand that which we ought to admire, you have forestalled the truth, even here. That marble before which I found you standing was held in Rome to be an admirable copy of the Laocoon. But were the original sculptors to rise again from the dead, they could not convey to the copy those mellowed tints and touches, and those tones of finish, which Time alone can impart.

"I would venture to suggest—not to teach, for we are all learners to the end of our lives,—the higher aim the great sculptors held in view while unfolding that marvellous development. It was the lesson of endurance,—to manifest in bodily form the height and depth that may be surmounted by the mind. The illustration of this great truth may be dwelt on through poetry while contemplating the reality before us.

“I confess that during my later Italian years, the works of the masterpieces of art left on me a less profound impression than the austere Moses of the great modern sculptor. It might arise from the same cause whereby many prefer Beethoven to all composers, or the savagery of nature to her more refined beauty.

“While contemplating it, let me dwell for a moment on the truth of its moral revelation, let me unite in one the Voices of Poetry with the silence of Sculpture,—the one is the tongue of the other :—

Behold the man of God reclined apart,
In solitary state, the human sun
That lighted chainless Israel to depart,
Guiding their pilgrim feet with toil foredone,
Through cloven waves and pathless deserts won,
Watched o'er by pillared fires ; the seer alone,
On Sinai's Mount that looked upon the ONE.
Lo, the great Hebrew prophet on his throne
Seated, as if with watching into marble grown.

Dread Statue of austere majesty !

Form of the heroic time, thou dost reveal
Gleams of our nature's passed sublimity ;

Who can behold thy prophet-brow nor feel
The awe, the reverential fear and weal

Of grey religion, faith august as thine ?

Truth on thy massive forehead stamps her seal,

A light doth from those full-orbed eyeballs shine,
The glory thou didst veil reflecting the divine.

“And now, I feel that it is time I should turn from Art to living society. You have not, I hope, thought that I have forgotten the human duties of my guardianship? Previous to your arrival, I had apprised the few friends of our neighbourhood, whom I have occasionally, though too rarely, met, of the proposed honour I intended giving them of a visit from my ward, to the effect that you are already expected. And now, I will point out to you”—advancing to the window—“some few of the houses, with their occupants, whom, I trust, you will end in knowing and appreciating.”

"I thought," said Constance smiling, "that such sublunary thoughts were overlooked."

"They were, on the contrary, the first acknowledged," he added in the same tone.

"Rarely shall I venture to interrupt you; but I must endeavour that, even in talk, you feel at home.

"If there be one truth more pronounced than another, it is, that among multitudes we feel most solitary; that there is more loneliness in the deserts of London than in the dreariest country solitude. It is there felt in that isolation of heart, when we have none to whom we can turn to dissipate the sensations that oppress us. In cities, everyone is absorbed and occupied among his own particular substances or shadows; realities or inanities, they are vital alike to him.

"In London the name of life is absorption. The days follow, and the nights "certify each other," so long as the pulses are healthful;

but the days are all too short for the trifles that are crowded into them. And from this cause proceed the apathy and the ossification of the heart among the dwellers of cities. The hasty questions of give and take are considered ; each meeting is forestalled, each has its especial design. There, the chief hope of the morning visitor is, that you may *not* be found at home.

“ Here, on the contrary, they love to welcome a new face, and why ? The trees and fields are around them, instead of streets and squares. The carriage-wheels on the gravel walk have to them a grateful sound ; *ennui* is dispelled, something of news or gossip is ascertained, and the mind is occupied with one subject, instead of vaguely wandering on many. Here, the position of each visitor is ascertained, proper deference is accorded, and both parties are satisfied.

“ In town, the reverse ensues. Conscious

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merit, or conscious family, or wealth, may knock at the aristocrat's door, and each be admitted ; but, if the useful visitor shall happen to make his or her appearance, the inferior guest will feel his position. He will be conscious that his self-respect would be half compromised in remaining ; that his isolation in that room is greater than if he stood alone in the freedom and solitude of his domain. In a word, among all congregations of life, the finer and loftier feelings of our natures are indurated or deadened.

“The aspects of human wretchedness, real or assumed, which are presented to us at every turning in the streets of London, make no impression on us. We are taught to believe them false, and we accept the creed, for it soothes our indolence, and we pass over to the other side. We look upon real aspects of misery, and we are assured that they are assumed. But the moral effect on us is one :

the natural leaning or love towards our fellow-kind is thereby lessened. There is, also, a wide development of character, manifested in the country. The pride of place or of position, the self-love, the vanity, all, in a word, of the eccentricities that can here develop themselves, are there challenged or ridiculed.

“Each of these mansions which we see from hence, studding the points of the landscape, is occupied by noticeable characters. Such men existing in London would be as water-drops, lost in the infinite ocean of life. There, for instance, rises the mansion, or rather the tomb, of Lord Graves, his real habitation being in the churchyard, and his nominal one is, as you perceive, closely adjoining it.”

“You surprise me,” said Constance. “If I am not indiscreet, might I venture to inquire—”

“That which is familiar to the whole

county, but which, if a town occurrence, would not be known within the next door. I would tell you the whole story of Lord Graves, but in doing so I should deprive you, and himself, of the interest of his personal narration. It is the only melancholy consolation, I may add, the resource of his life, of which I should regret to deprive him. He is a painfully interesting character, or, rather, he has made himself such by his remarkable conduct. In a word, he is in the full expectancy of a visit from ourselves. And now, looking along yonder copse-wood, you may discern, on its extreme edge, opening on the grey moor, a low dwelling-place, beside which, and forming a portion of it, rises a square tower, or observatory. That building, his home and his tomb, as he calls it, was raised by Andrew Rolle, a man known throughout England, or rather Europe, for his various acquirements.

“On that tower, during the lapse of fifty years, he has realised in himself that which was a desire in the divine mind of Milton :—

But let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, to unfold
What world, or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.

CHAPTER X.

The stationary star of those wild wastes,
 Diffusing round his influence benign,
 A heedful ear acceding to the wronged,
 Reproof to the oppressor dealt, and hope
 To the oppressed with grief or sickness bowed,
 Or journeying forth to life beyond the grave.
 In him dwelt age with moral dignity.

Revelations of Life.

"I VERILY believe that a more modest or diffident man than Andrew Rolle does not exist, or one more revered by the peasantry around him. On his first appearance here, his reception was more equivocal. He had attached magnetic wires to the trees

surrounding his home, to the effect that, during thunder-storms, they concentrated the lightning in a fashion that made it clear, even to the superior order of the peasantry, that he was in the closest league with Satan."

Constance smiled.

"Yet they called on him in a body, to point out the enormity of the pride in thus intermeddling with the works of the Almighty. It was in vain that he explained to them the simplicity of the case. The wires must be removed—it was a *sine qua non*—therefore he, like a sensible man, yielded; and, of course, remained unmolested.

"You will find his appearance as noticeable as his manner,—both will interest you."

"You mean, of course," said Constance, smiling, "that he is an established favourite with the ladies. The deference of a learned man is, you know, always gratifying to our vanity. If he lives on terms of intimacy

with those he loves, he is that being which we read of, but never see—a happy, or a contented man.”

“He is a contented man, certainly,” replied Sir Reginald; “is not that an equivalent to a happy one?”

“Not so—I feel there is a wide distinction; the one is a passive state of existence, the other, an active one.”

“You have described his exact character; he is a passive man, and,” he added, hesitatingly, “I believe, of no pronounced faith.”

“Is it indeed so?—and does he openly avow his principles?”

“Never—even to his intimates; he avoids the remotest allusion to his peculiar tenets, whatever they be.”

“How, then, came the reserve he had made to be publicly known?”

“It was made unavoidable. In any other country, a man entering on retirement would

have been respected, at least unpersecuted. But here, on his first appearance, notes and questions were sent, or rather showered on him—whether he was of the High Church, Low Church, or no Church?—a Whig or a Tory? He was beset in his walks, his privacy was invaded by a vulgar and insatiate curiosity to know, in a word, who and what he was. The unobtrusive sage was of too high a nature to deny, or to throw a veil over, either himself or his sentiments.”

“And what effect,” asked Constance, interested, “had such confessions on the many?”

“Marked; but only for a time. The larger portion of his neighbours, who devoted the seventh day to set a good example to their servants, were indisposed to come to a rupture with one in whose nominal religion they traced, if not a resemblance, a near affinity to their own. And, with respect to the ladies,

that boast which John Wilkes made of his uncomeliness, he might have made with his tongue. There was a charm and earnestness stamped in his manner which disposed all female hearts towards him. He appears among them as a welcome guest; he departs, a regretted one."

"You have described a dangerous man," said Constance smiling. "He is already made interesting to me, because I feel that he must have some religion, resolve it how he may."

"It is even so; Andrew Rolle is full of it, developing it when most unconscious. His spirit might be called an emanation of humility, and of veneration.

"Let us now return towards that mansion with the rotunda-front, situate on the slope of the hill. Therein lives, or rather hovers about it, Sir Charles Hastewell—his name and character being in strictest harmony. He has

acquired in the county the name of 'the man who is always in a hurry.' He exists through each day in endless occupation—in a state of perpetual motion. He is always in the midst of overpowering engagements. Everything is commenced by him in a state of agitation, and nothing is consummated, as he invariably arrives exactly half-a-minute after his appointed time.

"The report of the county is, that he was not only born in a hurry, but that he acquired the habit of hurry before he was born, if I may be allowed to say so, and, at the same time, explain the riddle.

"Lady Hastewell had always enjoyed the reputation of being the most restless woman in the county. But from morning to night she neither allowed herself or her guests to know the comfort of repose. The meals were penances; not only comfortless, in despite of admirable fare, but dangerous, nay,

sometimes fatal to those who were invalids. While they were eating, she was gliding about the room, opening various windows or doors, and giving her guests the full benefit of the freshest currents of air. The iron laws of etiquette prevented their remonstrance. The effect of such a process was, that her dinner-table became deserted; none could be found, excepting the most daring, to attempt the forlorn hope, when cold and catarrh were certain of levelling them. Ere the heir was born she had acquired the restless habit of changing her bed-chamber with each night, and, having thirty disposable rooms, her perambulation was ample. Her medical adviser was summoned while she was in the act of entering on her twentieth bed. He, from a pre-engagement, came in a hurry,—the heir was born in a greater hurry. In this state he set out from his cradle, and he will continue the race to

his grave. Sir Charles Hastewell appears ubiquitous. He is reported to have been seen on the remotest quarters, at one and the same moment. I ought to add, in finishing this sketch, that he keeps three horses, daily saddled and bridled, that he sits at table with doors and windows opened, watching each slightest change of weather, that he retires to rest with every necessary article drawn close round his bed, to be ready for an immediate start."

"I see another mansion rising above the prairie. It has a terrace in its front, and with what appears to be targets set up at each end of it."

Sir Reginald smiled :—

"It is the seat of Lady Forrester, or the Lady Diana, as the country gentry insist on calling her—both her husband and herself being insane on the subject of archery.

"During the winter season in town, she

lives in the prospect of future archery-meetings.

"Their house is filled with the bows and quivers of all peoples, from Nimrod downwards. They practise daily for hours; but as the baronet is full seventy, and short-sighted, his execution on the mark may be guessed. She is, unfortunately, of such large dimensions, that they impede her from drawing her bow to its height, to the effect that when her Ladyship shoots, the safest place is said to be the mark."

Constance could not forbear being amused at the quiet manner with which Sir Reginald Mortimer unfolded his country revelations.

"I give the hearsay, you must recollect, for hitherto I have not attended her meetings, although honoured by her invitations. I believe the fête of to-day was expressly made for us. She looks forward to the

honour of your acquaintance. And now, while the day is young, and the morning bright and beautiful, can we do wiser than fulfil some of the engagements for visits which I made, where each is expecting us? And, perhaps, your attendant will accompany you?"

Constance gladly acceded.

"We will commence with a visit to Lord Graves; he is the nearest to us; from thence we will turn from 'grave to gay.'"

CHAPTER XI.

And you scarce had found a trace
Of that green and fairy place,—
All was seared, and waste, and strange.

The Brother and Sister.

“I WARNED you that the house of Lord Graves was a sepulchre in itself,” observed Sir Reginald, as the carriage drew up before the iron gates of a long-extending park. The lodges on either side, which had been elaborately furnished in the Gothic style, were overgrown with ivy, and other parasitical

plants, shooting up round them, until their forms were scarcely recognizable.

The once broad gravel-walk, opening from the gates, and winding towards the mansion, had become a portion of the green field, its original lines being scarcely traceable excepting to the searching eye. The expanse of meadow-land within, interspersed with overgrown trees and plantations run wild, was overshadowed, and in many places lost, from being choked up with brambles, nettles, and long grass.

It was a scene of ruin and disorder, wearying the eye and heart and depressing the spirit.

Constance turned from contemplating it to the Baronet.

"I warned you," he observed, "of what we might expect, but you will see the truth of our welcome.

"Let us approach to the frontward of this

once princely mansion, and see if anyone replies to us."

There are few spectacles lying within our sphere of ordinary observation more interesting than that of an old family mansion falling fast into ruin. We daily hear of casualties happening within or without the circle of our intimate friends. We see the vacuum which occurs in the ranks. Their places are almost unconsciously filled up; forgetfulness gently hides them, as other and welcome figures fill up the interstices.

But, when we stand before an ancestral mansion, gradually sinking in its strength, from the mere effects of neglect or caprice, a more immediate impression is awakened. The reality of the object, and of the truth, is forced upon us. There is no evasion. Time and weather openly manifest what they have effected in rents, stains, or visible flaws; while Nature without, with a more significant ex-

pression, makes a mockery of what once were trim paths and ornamental works of art and of man.

Weeds and briars clustered thickly along the basement of the lower windows. The gravel-paths around had vanished into and become a part of the meadow land. The flower-beds were marked by denser masses of greenest brushwood. A luxuriance of herbage, rough and unadorned, carelessly shooting forth, had converted the whole garden into a copsewood.

The frontage of the mansion showed more prominently how rapidly decay presses on the untended work of man.

The windows in front were closed by shutters and barricaded, but the panes were mostly beaten in and shattered, and their gilt mouldings were exposed to the open air. One of the columns supporting the doorway had detached itself, and was about to fall, while

the vegetation, shooting up from the pavement, hid its base. The lawn in front, with its flower-beds, once decked with all that art could lavish on them, was merged into a field of bilious-looking green, where every parasite revelled at its ease. At the extremity, the stream, or lake, which had been opened, was now choked up, and metamorphosed into a prairie. Young trees of every character, and roughly shooting-up brushwood of the most vivid green, contended for existence on the crowded space they filled. They might be said to bear a resemblance to a troop of schoolboys in their holidays, rushing in and filling up purlieus that once were held sacred. It was one huge mass of struggling and abounding life, oppressing the air, and from which, although the sun was yet high, a chilling exhalation might be palpably felt.

The brightest hues of the sun and day were now falling on them, throwing a kind of

tawdry glory over their wilderness of disarray, looking like the savagery of nature, ere the hands of art had marked out the first traceries of the beautiful.

Constance gazed earnestly on the scene; she felt its interest and character.

"It is the very haunt and palace of desolation," she sighed. "Surely no human being lives within this place of gloom, from which light and air are excluded?"

"On the contrary, Lord Graves inhabits a small oratory at the extreme end of the mansion. Let us try the rust-eaten bell."

It sounded through the house like an alarum startling the silence. Ere its reverberation had ceased, the bars of the hall-doors were withdrawn; an alarmed-looking servant presented himself. He respectfully recognized the Baronet.

"Is Lord Graves at home and visible to us?"

"He is at his home, Sir Reginald, in the churchyard ; his Lordship does not return here until sunset."

"Will you announce to him our arrival at his house?"

"It is his Lordship's expressed wish, I am authorised to say, that his visitors come unannounced to the monument."

Sir Reginald regarded Constance, and reading her assent, he followed the servant towards the churchyard, which, although of small dimensions, was tended with excessive care.

The process of frequent mowings had nurtured the turf into a rich and mossy green, on which the eye reposed, and where the foot trod as on a velvet carpet.

Small bushes of myrtle and of laurel were sparsely among the graves. Occasional gray head-stones, rising like the bare foreheads of aged men, appeared to the eye, but marked

with the briefest records. The tenants of the grave had departed from life and its troubles, leaving but the initials of their names. They felt perhaps the truth, overlooked by the wealthy, that such a memorial was sufficient. If the foot of remembrance came, once more, to visit them, their letters would be enough ; if, as was certain, they stayed away, these letters revealed nothing to the eyes of indifference.

In the centre of this humble retreat for the dead, a large square monument was erected, which had the effect of reducing the rest into greater insignificance. It looked like Aristocracy sitting among the ashes of the dead. It was unadorned, saving by a single casement of richly-stained glass. The oaken door of entrance was opened, revealing the descending stairway that led to its interior chamber.

The servant had preceded the visitors to the monument, but the steps had already been

heard falling on the unbroken silence of the churchyard.

As Lord Graves, ascending the marble stairs, emerged into the sunlight, he less resembled a living man than one awakened from the dead. The impression was more pronounced as, wrapped in a gray overcoat and slouching hat of the same tone, he looked as if clad in the habiliments of the grave. But his countenance, benign and expressive, proved his sympathies with the living.

It was one of those genuine faces which we take on trust, paying back in full the coin which it offers to us.

Saluting Constance with the courtesy of a high-bred man, he took her hand within his own, at the same time welcoming, as an intimate, Sir Reginald Mortimer.

"I receive and I acknowledge this attention as the honour which I feel it to be," he said, addressing Constance. "For you, my friend,

we seem to have parted yesterday ; we will not, therefore, count up the days since we last met."

"My friend, you do not need it; friendship, like love, reposes on its security. Who has not proved that, when we know our friends lie within our hailing them, a complacency comes over us which engenders indolence, but not indifference. We know the object is there, we feel that we can lay our hand on him when we please; that knowledge suffices us. Like him who travelled over half the world to see Niagara, and took lodgings within a mile of it, we feel we can go when we like,—we end by rarely going at all.

"I solve this riddle, not by the law of selfishness, for that would draw us nearer to each other, but that each day has its stereotyped occupation ; until, from mere habit, we end in being the slaves of time and habitude, the wooden idols which we have set up. We have

also additionally our absorbing hopes, joys, and sorrows."

"On your face, my friend," observed Lord Graves, "something of this truth is traceable, while on this ingenuous forehead," he added, while handing Constance to one of the chairs placed in front of the monument, "I trace nothing beyond the grade of one 'a little lower than the angels.'"

"Repose in the sunlight, my friends. The day is a visible blessing; let us enjoy it, for there is happiness even here. I will sit between you; and now, let me tell you," he added, turning to Constance, "the feeling which has taught me to prefer this retreat to my own desolate home. Such a confession is a moral obligation which I have laid on myself. If it be a penance, it is a grateful one; it makes me feel better and wiser on each fulfilment."

CHAPTER XII.

Thou

Nor canst see, nor hear me now.

But this I know, that nothing more

Of joy or grief can vex thee here.

I follow thee to some far shore,

I know not where; but I have felt

This truth within my inmost soul:—

For such as thee to pass in youth,

Nor live again, were an untruth

Of Nature, an injustice dealt.

The Brother and Sister.

“ I HAD a daughter ; perhaps I may be forgiven for saying that she was almost as fair as yourself. Her greatest misfortune was in her mother’s early mandate of departure : she de-

parted from life while giving it to her daughter. The grief for this bereavement must have ended in impairing not only my natural health, but also my judgment. Perhaps it was first manifested in the kind of devotional idolatry, rather than love, which then concentrated itself on the beautiful infant, for the beauty which she possessed seemed to cast a light around her.

“ There was nothing which I thought too good for her ; I would have had the air finer as it blew on her ; I would have had the grass greener over which she played.

“ At this distance of time, I now recognize in all this a species of refined selfishness, gratifying only to myself. She was too infantine to be sensible of my affection. I did not then perceive that I was silently sowing the seeds which could scarcely fructify healthily ; that I was strewing, as it were, rose-leaves over a path where the natural inequalities of life

ought to have been made perceptible. Years thus lapsed by ; in the meantime I insensibly found in the rapidly-developing child all that filled up and made my happiness.

“ The day at length arrived when our relatives gathered round and hinted, in the usual conventional phrase, that she should be introduced. I knew that it must be so, but I had hitherto regarded her position in a one-sided light only. I had not contemplated the reverse of the medal ; I only felt the pride and the gratification I should feel, when in fashionable saloons, in being conscious that the lovely child that leant on my arm was my own. I did not consider that she was a human creature, developed with the ordinary human feelings. In presenting her before Royalty and perceiving the smiles of approval, in hearing the applause given to her when moving among the first society, I forgot that, while she walked among the high and the noble of the land,

she might meet those whom she might respect, or regard, or love.

“It was during the first and only season which we spent in town, that Adelaide frequently met in society Mr. Frederick Selby.

“There are cliques and circles in London which form and meet but in certain houses only. Ours happened to form one of those few; consequently, the young man, being the elder son of an earl, was received as a favoured guest among them.

“I know not why it was, or, if then I did know, I carefully concealed it from myself, but, from my first introduction to this young man, I conceived a shade of prejudice against him which was wholly ungrounded.

“Perhaps it was, for it is grateful to me now to trace up small feelings to their secret recesses, that there was, or I fancied there was through the eyes of prejudice, a look of pre-

tension and of conscious success about him, animated as he was in the first flush and joyousness of youth, that offended me.

"I felt that he was all which I would have been at his time of life, and was not. I verily believe that something like personal jealousy fed and fostered itself on aliment so poor as this.

"I had, also, an intuitive feeling that he secretly admired Adelaide—it could only be guessed, less from his regard, than from his excessive deference of manner towards her. I ought to have felt gratified by his preference, for the same expansion of feeling was given to myself. His attention to her was for awhile less marked, because admiration was offered to Adelaide by all. And thus they used to meet, and, slight as was their converse, all but myself might have perceived that a feeling and mutual sentiment existed between them. But during those evenings of meeting when

the dance or the converse was broken off for awhile, she was as anxious to return as she had appeared reluctant to leave me. There was a gratification in her manner which expanded towards myself; for when the heart is overcharged, it loves to pour forth itself even on objects that are indifferent—an effusion and relief which is itself a happiness.

“In the meanwhile the attachment was talked of, until the subject became familiar. It reached me at last; I was wakened from a dream of contentment which had lasted eighteen years.

“On an early morning Mr. Frederick Selby paid me a visit, when, with a manner and expression which might have been termed faultless, he requested my permission to devote his attentions to Adelaide.

“It happened on that morning, that my mind had been harassed and annoyed. In such

moods, trifles are magnified by the jaundiced mind into objects of importance which, in its healthier tone, had been unnoticed.

“While sitting at breakfast, I thought, or fancied, that Adelaide’s manner was restrained; there was a depression in her countenance which I had not seen until then. I thought I detected on her cheek the trace of recent tears. I observed also that a camelia was attached to her chatelain. I had never seen her wear a flower before, and, as she made no allusion to it, I felt it was a reserve. Conversing on trifles of the previous night, I remarked that ‘it was the first time I had ever seen her carrying flowers.’

“‘I never carry bouquets,’ she replied, ‘as I do not like to see them wither, but the truth is,’ she added, looking up with her calm regard, ‘that Mr. Selby asked me to wear it to day, being his birthday. He said, also, it might remind me to mention it to you, that you might

honour him by drinking his health on the day he comes of age.'

"In my hasty reply, I forgot what was due to myself, and to him ; I only felt the confirmation of the rumour. Had I led a healthier life, had I possessed a spark of true paternal feeling, or had her mother, like a watching spirit, stood by my side, I should have felt rejoiced in the announcement. As it was, I only saw that the being of whom I was most fond, who was gathering nightly adulation which I half appropriated to myself, was now on the eve of being separated from me, and to become the bride of one against whom I cherished a secret dislike.

"I hastily spoke out the first irate words I had ever uttered to my child, 'What possible interest, Adelaide, can I be supposed to feel in the birthday, or in the day of coming of age, of Mr. Frederick Selby?'

"At this abrupt announcement, her cheek

and forehead suddenly turned whiter than ashes; the cup which she had raised to her lips she gently, but tremblingly, returned to the breakfast-table.

“‘None, indeed,’ she faltered, ‘none whatever,’ in a voice so low that none but myself could have caught its accent. ‘I ought not to have mentioned it to you, but I had thought, judging from your manner to Mr. Selby, that he had been fortunate in gaining your good opinion. I have erred; and I can only say that I regret it is not so.’

“The manner and the appeal were irresistible. I hastily rose from my chair, and taking both her hands into my own—

“‘My dear child,’ I said, as I saw her agitation increasing, ‘I entreat of you to forgive me; I have spoken my first angry words of a life—senseless as is all anger—they shall be also the last.’

“‘It is nothing,’ she said, ‘nothing, believe

me. I will never touch on the subject again,' and she reverted to the lighter topics of the previous evening. It was her first attempt at acting, and I saw how little she could assume the mask. I felt the impression I had made; I reverted also to other subjects.

"She followed passively in the track where I led, but her mind was not with me. It was a relief to both when the meal was ended.

"The first rupture of our lives had occurred; the wound and the scar could not be healed together.

"She withdrew, looking the same as wont, but her step was slower—the influences remained although the covenant of peace was sealed. A stronger sentiment had arisen in her heart, subdued, yet secretly cherished; she had made it succumb to duty, but the strife had overcome her.

"I retired to my study, resolved to analyse and root out from my nature whatever

unworthy sentiment had blinded me to the interests of my daughter. I felt how alone in the world that daughter stands who has the misfortune to survive her mother. The father may take his place as a pillar and rock of defence; but the softer ties which supported her, to which she turns or clings, the confessions that relieve the heart while fortifying it, the advice that heals while it confirms, the eye that lightens up, and the tongue that encourages in the hours of mental or of bodily weakness, come only from the loving, forbearing, and enduring mother.

“In this frame of mind, regarding myself with the dissatisfaction that jaundices the present and the future, the door of my study opened and Mr. Frederick Selby was announced.

“The time was unfortunately chosen. I had not rallied up my mind to the healthful tone and tension it was assuming. The unconscious

cause of the rupture stood abruptly before me, when I was unprepared. I instinctively guessed, by his appearance at that hour, that the motive of his visit was to draw that daughter from me who was the hope and the pride of my life. It flashed across me suddenly that there was something like a design in the visit. The unworthy thought occurred to me that a preconcerted arrangement might have been made; that I was to be openly attacked ere prepared for any resistance. I did not pause to repel the unworthy sentiment; my prejudice acquired an additional bias. I would not repeat—I have endeavoured to forget—the substance of an interview, brief as it was, during which his manner was perfect, and would have been gratifying to any other than myself. It was respectful without sacrificing self-respect, and frank and open, without the shadow of assurance. But what fabled monster is more deaf

and blind than prejudice? I recall only the termination of the interview. The veriest trifle, the turning of a straw, will sometimes cause effects to ensue that are the gravest of a life. Thus, while addressing me, my eye caught a moss-rose which was attached to his vest. I recognised the same flower which on the previous evening I had given to Adelaide.

“In the mood of mind I was, this feather overweighted, or was rather a mountain in the scale. Having listened to his peroration with scarcely disguised impatience—

“‘I feel honoured,’ I began—using that stereotyped French phrase which proves us the imitators we are—‘in the proposals which you have made me, and in the preference which you have given to my daughter. I think, however,’ I added, continuing such banalities, ‘that we might, perhaps, waive the subject for the present. My daughter is

rather too young for such selection, although I appreciate the honour of such an alliance. And, as I understand, also,' I added, after a slight pause which he did not attempt to interrupt, 'that you are contemplating immediate travel, perhaps, on its consummation, when time has tested your sentiments, and experience has ripened them, you will be a better judge of your confirmed feelings towards her.'

" 'Confirmed they are, and will remain,' he said, while following the example I had set in slowly rising, while the blood suffused his cheek until it swelled each vein of his forehead. But under his unlooked-for reception he did not forget his self-respect, in restraining each impulsive feeling. He stood like one who had disciplined himself to self-command, who could subdue his manner to that tone of society in which he had moved.

" 'I yet have to thank you in having listened

to me, and to express my regret,' he slowly added, recovering the calm tone which I had assumed, 'that I should have intruded thus far on your privacy, and at so inconvenient an hour.' And having thus spoken, and, inclining rather to himself than to me, he slowly left the room.

"But it was I who had driven him to this step by my own granite conventionalism. Had he waited, perhaps, a moment longer, my revulsion of feeling, which was already turning in his favour, might have effected a change in our mutual lives. But he was gone, even while I was shaping in my mind how I could frame an apology, perhaps, explain the real cause of my coldness without compromising myself.

"I hastily rose when he had left the room; my hand was on the bell.

" 'Yet, no,' I said aloud, 'I will not recall him,—fortunately, we shall meet to-night. I

heard him say when we parted on the previous evening, that he should certainly be present at the Duke of D——'s.'

"I felt convinced from Adelaide's manner, when we met at noon, that she was ignorant of his visit.

" 'Adelaide,' I said, with an air of assumed indifference, 'I see that you have lost, or given away, the moss-rose that I gave you, which I gathered from the gardens at Chiswick.

" 'Neither, I assure you,' she said in the same tone, 'but, during the dance of last night, Mr. Selby begged so much that he might retain it for me until this evening, that I entrusted it to him, telling him it was a gift of yours.'

"I felt, while she spoke, how unworthy had been my conduct, and how utterly groundless my suspicions; a presentiment of ill weighed heavily on me.

"I recall that last eventful evening which we

ever spent in public together. I was engaged in animated conversation with our noble host, when, turning aside, I was gratified in perceiving that my daughter was in earnest conversation with Mr. Selby. I saw that he was there, and that knowledge sufficed me. I felt that all would be well. I resolved to go up to him with opportunity, and make the amplest amends. I had not observed any change in his appearance or demeanour beyond that his cheek was pale and his manner somewhat agitated; Adelaide's face was averted. At the moment while I regarded him, he was tendering to her the rose, which she hesitated in receiving from him. In another moment the Duke's attention was absorbed by an illustrious arrival.

"I then hastily turned to the place where I had observed them. I found Adelaide alone, seated, half hidden among exotics, within the recess of the window.

"She was looking on the ground, pale, trembling, and agitated.

"'My dearest Adelaide!' I exclaimed :—

"She hastily interrupted me, 'I really feel ill, papa; will you take me home?—indeed, I feel very ill—I fear that I may fall unless you support me.'

"I saw and heard nothing further. Abruptly separating the throng already forming round us, I led her from the heated rooms. During the passage homewards I uttered not a syllable. I felt interdicted—I knew all that I had done; I foresaw the beginning of the end.

"Perceiving her somewhat recovered when in the saloon at home—'Tell me, Adelaide, I entreat of you—'

"'Indeed,' she replied hurriedly, 'I have nothing to tell beyond that which is most natural. Mr. Selby briefly told me that on the morrow morning—even now, for it is already daybreak—he should take his depart-

ture for the south. He said moreover,' she added with hesitation, and in a tone scarcely audible, 'that you had especially counselled him to do so.'

"I felt the blood of self-reproach rise to my forehead from the revulsion of the self-accusing monitor.

"There are certain expressions and modes of utterance which leave those who hear them interdicted. I said nothing, but I saw at a glance the infinite injury I had done. I felt that I could offer no reparation; that I could utter no word which would not trample on some wounded feeling, and injure it most then when attempting its relief.

"'Adelaide,' I said at length, hesitatingly, 'we will talk to-morrow.'

"'I shall feel better to-morrow,' she added, attempting a faint smile. 'Even you appeared to feel the heat of the saloon. I shall be able to talk to-morrow,' she continued,

rising unsteadily, and taking a wax-taper from the console; 'I shall be myself again.'

"She turned to the door that led into her chamber. It was the first time in her life that she had retired without offering me her cheek to kiss.

" 'You have not bade me good night, Adelaide,' I said.

" 'I really forgot it,' she replied, standing, or rather supporting herself as if with effort against the marble table. I kissed her forehead, which was damp, and cold as that of a statue. 'May you rest well!' I said hesitatingly.

"She smiled, and slowly, turning from me, she closed the door.

"As I passed her room, which opened on the corridor, I heard the long, low murmurings of a voice, as if raised in appealing prayer.

"I shall not pursue too true à tale with the like minuteness, or dwell on the changes both

in mind and body which I traced in her from that eventful night.

“It was by her own request that I returned to our family seat.

“‘I shall feel better and less excited,’ she observed, ‘when I am relieved from the ties and the oppressions of a London life.’

“On returning to her childhood’s haunts, and in receiving her intimate friends, I hoped that the impressions of a season and a life would be forgotten. Continual visitors filled the house; their selection and contrasts formed my study. I knew that Adelaide had inherited a certain delicacy of health from her mother, but I knew, also, that the crystal vase, if carefully tended, might survive the rougher vessel.

“It appeared as if she, unconsciously, or by design, ran upon the rock which we were most anxious she should avoid. In the cause of her final departure from this life, too, there

appeared to be a fatuity too remarkable to be left untold.

“It was during a burning noon in September that I descended into the shrubberies that enclosed a sheet of water, which is now a heap of copsewood. I passed the bridge which led over to its little islet. It was a wild and romantic spot, and the favourite haunt of Adelaide. I soon perceived her sitting on the grass at the foot of a cedar. Respecting her solitude, I was about to steal away unperceived, in silence, when recollecting her recumbent attitude, it occurred to me that she slept. I returned; she was in a deep sleep. A small volume, escaped from her hand, was lying on the turf; it was the poetry of Collins.

“Approaching closer, I perceived she must have bathed her head in the water, and probably fallen to sleep, unconsciously, for the day had been oppressively sultry. Her long

hair fell over her shoulders, still wet and dripping. The shadows of the cedars, even then, for the sun was declining, felt chilly above her. I saw the danger of her position, and I awakened her. Since that day, I have thought that such actions were more than inadvertencies, the indifference, or rather the recklessness, of one who appeared to care little as to what befell her. From that evening, I dated a visible and a rapid change, from the effects of a disease which, of all others, we might venture to call treacherous, if the justice of Nature could be accused by beings who know so little of her laws.

“I need not dwell on each phase of that decline; the hopes raised and the depression following; the confirmed rally, and the inevitable relapse; the false and feverish strength, and the slow and certain growth of the disease.

“‘The only pang I feel,’ she said, when

debility had reduced her to the sofa, 'is in the grief which I shall give you. You will accuse yourself of having caused me a chagrin which unstrung my nerves and brought on that inherited ill-health which only waited the event for its appearance. It must have occurred to me earlier or later in life. I remember—could I forget?—the devoted and affectionate parent which you have been to me from my childhood. And if you uttered hasty words to me, and to another, who shall say that they were unjust? I have scarcely strength left to make my last request; I know that to ask is to have it fulfilled. All last requests are held sacred because they are the last. Receive this locket; carefully preserved within it are the leaves of the camelia which he returned to me on that last night, telling me that, if living, he would again reclaim it from me. Restore it to him, I beseech you, when you again meet in this iron world; it

needs no message, when silence is language. He will then be free, and he may turn to another, worthier than myself, but this will Adelaide say, that he can turn to no one who would have been—'

"Her voice faltered, and the tears were rolling full and fast down her cheeks. With a strong effort she resumed:—

"'But I shall then be, I am thankful to think, "where the weary are at rest." My other request is, that you will place me by the side of my mother, from whose death grew my unworthy life.'

"You have now heard the record," said the mourner, pausing from emotion, "which, to my friend, was already known; but such records do not weary us."

"For you," he added, taking the hand of Constance, "I expected you; you came to see and to hear me; I read the effect of my confessions on that face of candour and truth.

You will return and see me. I read your answer; yet if, on some distant day, you do not find me on my watch, offer up your prayer for the unworthy one whose confession you have heard."

Lord Graves accompanied his friend to the wicket, but he was silent, overcome by his emotions.

"Here we part," he said; "for awhile, farewell."

"I think," observed Sir Reginald to Constance, after they had left the porch, that, however much we may estimate the candour of Lord Graves, revealing, as it does, a sincere man of an erring judgment, with a selfish pride, which has been fearfully punished, we shall agree that he still betrays the same want of perception in his present mode of life.

"His grief has settled into a monomania; he sees it only. His ascetic life and self-command may be respected, but not imitated.

“ But when he leaves his house to desolation, and himself to decline of health—which is stamped in his face—amounting to a species of self-suicide, as a vain offering to the dead—we discern how self-denial becomes a sin, no longer passive, but active in its bad example. Thus, those who are his relatives, and to come after him, are neglected, and of what benefit is he to the departed?—who, could they answer from their tombs, would be the first to reprove him. He will pass from life like a shadow, leaving nothing behind him saving a condemned precedent.

“ He embodies a picture of refined selfishness of which he only is unconscious; and which he would be the first to condemn in another.

“ Even his daughter’s departure has been the cause of a renewed ancestral pride, for he has enlarged the grand tomb, which puts the humbler records of the poor around it to shame. The aristocracy of earth are not

satisfied with plate and fine linen, and the high places of life; but in the realms of leveling death, their poor dust must be gathered together under tenements and domes that carefully fence off the vulgar. They must be held especially apart in their corruption. Reduced pyramids must be erected in the churchyards, to point out the namelessness and the worthlessness of their tenants."

CHAPTER XIV.

His mind looked steadfastly from his deep eyes,
Stilled as dark waters sledged with fringing brows ;
The calm look of a conscious soul oppressed
By solemn trifles of this daily life.

Revelations of Life.

“AND now,” observed Sir Reginald, as the carriage drew up before the gateway of a modest-looking mansion, half hidden among trees, “we are arrived at the house and tomb, as he calls it, of the celebrated Andrew Rolle. We will alight at the lawn gate ; no carriage, with its idle armorial bearings, and

idler state, should disturb the sanctuary of such a man. You may see in his lawn something of the character of its inmate."

The lawn graduated from the parlour casements to its boundary gravel-walk, which was enclosed with ivy-girt walls. From its central point, a fountain threw up its waters, received again in a tazza of classic beauty. But the crowning attraction to the eye was the flower-baskets, which, encircling the fountain, gave a fairy effect of lightness to the scene, looking, in the distance, as if the ends of rainbows were reposing on the turf.

Constance uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight. "I thought that in the gardens of Chiswick I had seen flowers in their fullest beauty ; but here I perceive the meaning of the word 'glory' when applied to flowers. He who tends must have a feeling towards them ; no ordinary gardener could retain them arrayed as they are."

Sir Reginald Mortimer smiled :—

“ I fear for the heart of the sage, wise as he is, should he hear your tribute to himself. Take heed what you say, lest a bird of the air carry the matter ; to love his flowers, is to love himself. I verily believe that he considers their preservation as the greatest and the dearest of all his works. Let us enter the sanctum and surprise Archimedes at his work.”

It is often observed that the *personnel* of literary or scientific men gives little intimation of their inward characters. On the contrary, the heaviest and obtusest faces are frequently material flesh-marks that hide the spiritual presences beneath them. They are unapparent through sensual mouths, or in the muddy pools of confused and watery-looking eyes.

Andrew Rolle formed an exception to the rule ; his face was his self-reflection.

The eye would have singled him out from

the roll of common men. His forehead would have had the lordly fault of being too high, but for the impress of benignity stamped in every line. The moral harmony within him was reflected from the calm surveying eyes, that spoke of the self-possession which looked forth from their innermost chambers. It was a face whose unison of expression inspired the confidence which it gave.

Constance regarded him with an earnestness which might have been flattering to a vain man.

Having taken the hand of Sir Reginald Mortimer, as one whom he knew and respected, he turned with something of a paternal air towards Constance.

“My dear young lady, let me confess to you, and be believed, that I have looked to the gratification of welcoming you from the day I received the intimation of your visit.”

There was a fascination in the manner of

Andrew Rolle which explained his popularity. The earnestness of his regard made itself felt, less from the smile playing almost imperceptibly round his lips, than from the air of candour discernible in his eyes.

"The stranger, and yet the intimate welcome here," he said, releasing the hand of Sir Reginald.

"My friend, I bring one with me who will be, if I may be allowed to say it, a hostage for our mutual faith. You have already lost the tribute she has paid to your flowers."

"I should hardly dare to confess even to her the passion I have for flowers. I regard them with a species of holy feeling, if anything really pure and holy could emanate from our natures. That it does so, I am chiefly conscious while contemplating them: but it is they that give the sensation; it is I who feel it, when given.

"I consider flowers to be the crowning points of a great work finished—the last touches of

the Master ; as if Nature, having established their fine life and feeling, vibrating through each fibre, opened them in hue and blossom to the light—as if they should express before their Creator a manifested joy on the consummation of their perfected being.”

Andrew Rolle spoke with an earnestness of manner which riveted the attention of Constance. His friend listened to him with interest.

“To ask a woman if she love poetry and flowers, is to ask the priestess at the altar if she have religion ? Women concentrate all poetry within themselves and originate it in man. They are the sources and models of all grace, of all refinement, and of all beauty : and our purest aspirations emanate but from themselves.”

“I shall not deprive Miss Cleveland of talk which is best held in a *tête-à-tête* dual,” observed Sir Reginald ; “such harmonies are strained by a third. I have your laboratory

in prospect, to which I promised a visit ;” and he left the apartment.

“ How happy you must feel in this retreat ! ” said Constance ; “ it looks the very home of quiet, and of happiness.”

“ For happiness, say—contentment, which is the mind’s repose. And yet,” she continued, “ you have fulfilled each end of your being ; your name has become a byeword of respect ; such a consummation must be the height of your ambition.”

“ What will you say when I confess to you the truth—that I feel more gratification in the growth and cultivation of those flowers than in the greatest success of any book of dry leaves I have sent forth, or any mental discovery that I, butterfly-like, may by chance have alighted on ? I have outlived the feeling, not from the weight of years, but of experience ? I have sought higher aims than the breath of reputation, which no two men ac-

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cord alike, either arbitrarily asserted or flatly denied. I sought Truth only, through a life. I was idle enough once to think that I was on her very track. I forgot the others who had cried out—‘I have found her’—full three thousand years since, and that now we are as far removed from her as ever.

“I think nothing of myself, and for what is called ‘fame,’ even the poet, cormorant as he is on such food, outlives the feeling ere past his fiftieth milestone. He has slaved out his life before the Altar, pouring forth eloquent hymns that were either unheard or heard by a congregation that had passed by, leaving him to those who knew him not. If he attempted to embody the higher imaginative thought, how few listened to him! If he awakened the lyric chords with a lighter hand, he had a fuller audience for the hour, but the end of both was the same—in indifference.

“If such as these wearied by the way, and

spake of the day too late, and proved the vanity and vexation of spirit—should not the sophist be allowed to own the tone of human despondency?

“And look to the consummation of even-handed justice, when the drama is over—when the gates of life and death are closed.

“When we literary men, as we term ourselves, are gone, we leave behind us for awhile a name. Few read our books; the name we have acquired by them is sufficient. We may be remembered, or scoffed at, for a brief while by many,—you are sighed for by the few,—both are buried in one and the same oblivion. Some few books, always too many, may come from us; or good or bad, they are placed in some few libraries, or silent mausoleums, to absorb the quiet dust. A monument in the churchyard is your record. Some two or three may go there after you—those who find ‘sermons in stones,’ some few readers may come

after us, deposited on our shelves. No second visitations are made to either. The living have no time, and the world reclaims its own."

There was an earnestness in the manner of the sage that made his truthfulness felt.

"Your words have the effect of making me feel as if life itself were but a vain flourish of trumpets, the prelude of some grand spectacle—"

"Which has never arrived, and never will do so. The expectation of it forms the main cause of our progression. I see your eyes are wandering to that parterre of flowers now opening their brightest hues under the sunlight. You shall join them for the moments while I pursue my friend to his retreat."

But Andrew Rolle found his friend ensconced in his study, the window of which opened on the garden. The air and the breath of flowers filled the room.

"An hour since," he said, "and you would

have found the grey-haired schoolboy at his Saturday's lesson in Homer. I left it off at Harrow in my fifteenth year—but I have retained my habit, and, so far as I could, the feeling, even at my fiftieth milestone."

The walls of the study were hung around with Flaxman's designs. A row of shelves was surmounted by a marble bust of the immortal bard. Various editions of his works were ranged beneath it, the volumes of his critics being placed beneath them. He pointed to the bust:—

"Behold my first love—and, the lady being absent, I may add, my last. Let him who would preserve his boyhood's freshness, his truth of feeling and manly character, cling to some relique of his boyhood's studies; so shall he bear with him to the close of his life something of the ingenuousness of his boyhood."

"And why not a word of talk on a sub-

ject ever fresh and young ? ” observed Sir Reginald.

“ Especially at present,” replied the sage. “ It appears to be Homer’s fate to have his head converted into a barber’s block, each critic fitting thereon his own fantastic head-gear. The Germans led the way in denying his existence, passing his revelations over to rhapsodists. The next class admitted his being, but insisted on his smallest share in their composition. A third party devoted a life in reproducing the poet’s verses as he ought to have written them, and did not. The smaller class, the men of common sense, saw the one mind and the one character that looked out from the eyes and utterance of the ‘ Iliad ’ and ‘ Odyssey.’ These recognised in a single bone the anatomy and the dimensions of the Titanic skeleton. His last and most original critic made him out the expounder of Scripture—that one parable pervaded the Poem.

“Thus, Apollo was the saviour and destroyer, who, with Zeus and Athena, formed the unmistakable type of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Latona represented the woman from whom the seed was to spring ; in a word, Latona typed the blessed Virgin.

“The heroes of Homer, the uninformed sons of Nature, are placed on the same level with the profoundest revealments and creations of him,

The demigod who dwelt by Avon’s stream.

Dante is instanced not as the rival of Homer, but on a par with Shakespeare. He is upheld as one incessantly converse with the nature of man. Such shadowy phantoms as Francesca and Ugolino, though admitted to be drawn in merest outline, are as much the common property of mankind as Lear and Hamlet. Tasso, also, in his tinsel, may perhaps in details of battle be superior to Homer. Now, if there be one

point wherein Homer excels all mortal men, it is in the details of his battles.

“On such opinions one may best use the critic’s own remark:—‘The civilized mind of the world effectually puts them down.’ To which I add, the severest condemnation of such remarks is to repeat them.

“A thousand years hence, when the Russian peasant may be planting his potatoes beside the marshes of the Thames, the same inanities will be broached of Shakespeare. What critic of that era, who will not raise questions and doubts on his Titanic inequalities?”

“Every critic on Homer,” observed Andrew Rolle, “appears to renounce common sense, that sole substratum of the mind. All prove too much or too little of the most obvious of all human poets.

“Each of his heroes is more or less tainted with savagery. Achilles regrets that he cannot eat Hector, having already gone the length of

human barbarity. Hecuba repeats her desire to eat him ; and Zeus remarks to his wife that he believes she would be delighted if she could eat up, not only old Priam, but each of his sons. Even Hector is scarcely freed from such barbarism ; the only faultless hero of the Iliad is the kingly Sarpedon.

“ Yet would you venture to assert that we are wiser now than then ? Have we solved one problem of our destiny here ? Have we by any saws softened the dart of death ? Have grief and misery lost their bitterness ? Does not the evil and iron of poverty grind into the heart of man, or has the knowledge of our God increased ?

“ It is the privilege accorded to age to vaticinate darkly of the future. We overcast it with shadow rather than light from the slower flow of our vitality. Yet the aspect of nations in our day, proves that the heaviest vials of evil are yet to be poured forth. The thrones

of Europe repose as on the craters of extinct volcanoes; the agencies are at work that will hurl them from their foundations.

“Recurring to our own country, we weary to hear of the reform of a Constitution weakened as it is by a complication of maladies. In the meanwhile, the Children of the House of Commons, still, as ever, neglect their time and their country, absorbed in their endless wranglings, while the clouds without are silently deepening.

“Instead of concentrating their strength, a band of patriots, serrated like the Theban phalanx of old, while uniting and directing their energies to strengthen the defence of their country, to re-sinew their army and navy, to impose a more onerous taxation on the wealthier classes, who are formed to bear them, how do they employ time on the very crisis of convulsion? Even as they have done through past years—as they would do to

their closing existence. The absorbing idea of these 'children of larger growth' is to be allowed to play on in their school-room the game of 'In or Out.' The plea of Reform is set up by either party as a shield and watch-word, to hide their ambition, their selfishness, and their passions from their country and themselves.

"And thus, session after session lapses by, one and the same. The children meet in their school-room, the wordy contests recommence, the old gladiators rise, the usual fence ensues, and aimless speeches fill the morning columns, as worthless as the paper they cover.

"Then come forth the Estimates, less to meet than to stem aggression; for the wealthiest of nations can be also the most parsimonious.

"Then, clinging to his opportunity, the chosen man of peace rises. Gregarianism is furrowed on his face; the soul of the sheep and the camel is traced in each sleekest line.

You discern that his eyes and mouth are peccorous; that the cheerful psalm he sings from morning to night is that our sheep may bring forth thousands and tens of thousands in our streets.

“He is blatant on the wickedness of war. His eye is filled with teeming aspects of cots and cottagers, with the pregnancies of coming harvests. His soul looks forward to a Millennium of plenty. He would have the Peers driven from their estates, now made deserts for grouse and deer, which once were tenanted by bands of men who would have bled and died for their country. He would subdivide the spoil among universal suffrages.

“Among six hundred listeners weakness is certain of support. Even in defeat a certain amount of evil is effected by these emasculated Sybarites. The Estimates are kept down—what patriot would hazard his place and position by too protracted a struggle?

“And this farce will go on until the curtain of the tragedy shall rise in thunder.

“England encases herself within the proof-armour of a sublime egotism. However vulnerable be the heel of the hero, he does not perceive it. With defence that must necessarily be unequal, with an army immeasurably inferior, his self-confidence remains unshaken.

“As the Achillean chief fell by his sole vulnerable point, so may England eventually fall by that procrastination which has still been the cause of her heaviest disasters.

“England meditates while the foeman acts. At the eleventh hour, having wasted the intervening time in listening to, or, rather, enduring, the endless wranglings of the Children of the Commons; in complaining of measureless misrule in the formation and failure of her armaments, as of her Constitution, without seriously and fervently putting her energies in

play to reform either, the wealthiest Power in the universe deals out the measures of defence with a hesitating and parsimonious hand.

“Nothing less than a volunteer support of the largest force can save her from invasion, or establish her existence among the nations ; nothing less than her uttermost ruin will induce her to second them with a large liberality.

“And thus she will go on her way ; doubting, dividing, and weakening her resources, until the tocsin sounds, and the conjoining Powers fall on her unprepared, and crush her into nothingness.

“In the meanwhile, our slowness, and our taunts, too unadvisedly bestowed, are minutely scrutinized by eyes that are sleepless.

“The character of the watcher is not un-resembling that of our Cromwell, that compound of spiritualism and animalism, coarsely conjoined, through which the strongly-fabricked

will forced a path of its own, as abruptly taken as it was decisively pursued.

“In the same fixedness of purpose, in the one aim, carefully taken and silently pursued through life, Louis Napoleon approaches to the immortal regicide ; but there the analogy ends. The one, lion-like, personally asserted himself, whether it were in turning out the Commons pell-mell, and locking the door in their faces, or being first and foremost in the battle, where he appeared, and was, invincible, to the effect that one cannot conceive his being vanquished. The other participates the steadier and colder nature of the snake—close-breasted and impassive. He, like Augustus, wins his fights through his lieutenants, while silently pursuing aims towards universal empire. He waits, if it be necessary, through a life, until the hour, marked by him, is thrown up by sure, but slow circumstance, until the moment arrives for the life-calculated spring.

"I would note further of these remarkable men, that the judgment of the one was never compromised; the other, often swayed, in despite of a stolidity less real than assumed, by the irritability or impulse of the hour.

"But when Victor Hugo designated such a man as 'the little,' he proved his own littleness in saying so. Let us dare to be just; the position which the Emperor has won he has greatly maintained. None but a mind of the astutest class could have transmuted events as they passed into golden effects, by the alchemy of a will whose boldest cards are yet to be played. To the upward gazing multitudes of lesser spirits which he left behind him, he may appear 'little'—but it is from the immensity of his altitude."

CHAPTER XV.

We seek for knowledge in the airy space ;
We tread on revelations at our feet.

Revelations of Life.

At this moment, Constance re-entered the apartment, while gaily observing :—

“ Well, I think it high time to disturb you, if only to unbend such solemn-looking faces. Why do you dwell on the shadows of things, as I perceive you have done, and not on the brighter lights ? ”

“ Because,” said the sage, smiling, “ they

grow out of the light,—they are of one and the same substance.”

“But,” added Constance, “if you were talking of the future, as I guess, do you not believe that a Power watches over the fates of nations and protects those which are oppressed?”

“The history of the universe lies open to you. Has it been so, from the fall of Jericho to the Sepoy massacres of yesterday?”

“Surely, then,” observed Constance, “it is wiser and happier to dwell on our own hour, nor vainly speculate beyond it?”

“Yet, who shall say,” observed the sage, “if such experience be not given to make us wiser?—if the records of the past be not the veritable handwriting of God on the wall, though still presented to us in vain?”

“You have, then, the darkest forebodings of the future?”

“This consolation I have—that from con-

vulsion itself comes repose ; the destiny of man, as of Nature, is change."

"Yet, how easy to imagine," said Constance, "a world of peace and of contentment !"

The sage shook his head :—

"But without mankind, with no wants—no hopes—no passions—the necessities that make men what they are, and which were expressly given them to be indulged ; while, from their indulgence, grows that death whose anchorage is in the hopes of another life."

"But mine," said Constance, "are feelings of religion, that are certainties, and not unsubstantial hopes."

"God forbid, I reiterate," said the sophist, regarding her with a profound feeling, "that I, with inferior weapons, should attack a panoply like yours, and cased in truth as adamantine as it appears ! The thoughts that studious men borrow from the past and present are but the oars ; they launch our boat into the

ocean ; we then cast them aside and hold on our course ;—the lights above us are our guides.

“ We resemble Ulysses alone on the solemn sea at night, the silent hosts of heaven directing his course ; nor could poetry find a more solemn and impressive subject.

In that boat

A knight sat, nor needed crown remote ;
His passions, subject to his high command.
He raised the sail, and floated from the land ;
His eye was on the stars that seemed to keep
Watch o'er him, rolled along the wasteful deep ;
Each, like himself, impelled by duty's sway,
To hold its incommunicable way.
There the sweet Pleiads shone, that rule the storm,
There through the mist-foam gleamed Orion's form ;
And the Bear, watching from his silent throne,
Along a track as lonely as his own !
Fixed to the helm, he watched the polar star
That through the darkness shone on him from far,—
Strength-giving, fixedness of god-like will,
And law of obligation to fulfil,—
Opposed by fate, foes, shipwreck, and the storm.
Calm and sedate, he looked the embodied form
Of Virtue, fleeing from the realm of sense ;
Strong in the shield of holier innocence !

“But herein is the unnatural position in which we place ourselves. You, and such as you, are left on the shore of life, happy in the enjoyment of the things and forms you love. Your footstool is the earth, but your eyes are raised heavenward. Your strength is in your faith. You live and die among the pure lights of a religion that has been given to you as the most inestimable of blessings. But the wise, vain in their own conceit, die with no certain anchorage. They delay religious meditation until the closing hour of their lives, when their minds are enfeebled and their proselytism is nought.

“In such cases procrastination is something more than ‘the thief of time,’ as designated by the great Master.

“I consider procrastination as the lethargy of an immortal soul that sleeps over the hour-glass confided to it by Time, until the last

sands are lapsed—and for ever. They lie down, and they submit to Death, but they submit to him as a necessity. They confess no allegiance; with their last breath their hands remain uncrossed over their breasts. He re-opens the gates of life by which they entered; they pass through them, but they make no sign. The doors close over them, and for ever. They departed as helplessly as they entered—infants of a different growth, but with this distinction—that their minds were previously reduced to the same weakness as their bodies when first they passed through them into existence.”

There was an earnestness in the voice and manner of the sage that left its impression on Constance. He continued:—

“No human being ever shook off all belief. Powerful minds have denied the One whom they could not comprehend; but not one ever passed away denying the Omnipotent.”

tence of Nature, which, in other words, was God, vested in a material form. I see the shadows on your forehead," he added, observing the face of Constance. "But are you just? Would not such men desire to wrap themselves in your faith, that converts the grave into a couch of blessed resurrection?"

"She will scarcely return to me again," he added, glancing at Constance while appealing to his friend. I fear that, on her first visit, the genius of the place will leave it for ever!"

"You do me injustice, said Constance. "I trust to return often; and who could remember you but with respect?"

"Then for a while," he said, on the parting salutations at the wicket, "for a while only—farewell."

"You have discovered the truth of Andrew Rolle," observed Sir Reginald Mortimer, as they left the gates. "His nature

is too open for concealment. In your estimation he is now, I suppose, a fallen spirit?"

"You do wrong to us both in saying so. Who am I that I should judge—far less condemn a mind like his? He has overlooked the props and supports of that faith, deprived of which I should not desire to live one hour. To look into his countenance is like looking into a mirror, wherein you read the reflection of every virtue."

"You speak of him justly; therefore it is he stands pre-eminent among us. All respect him, however they may dissent; of his real opinions they know and care nothing. But now," added he, "our day must be wound up with a closing visit to another. The serious pieces have been heard; and now we will turn to the entertainment—'from grave to gay—and the Lady Diana Forrester is the gayest of the gay. We shall find her in the very element of her delight. This is her *fête*-day,

and the archery does not commence until the afternoon. You will meet, also, one or two other originals who will develop themselves to you without the formality of an introduction."

CHAPTER XVI.

Come, let us goe while we are in our prime,
And take the harmlesse follie of the time.

Herrick.

WHILE approaching the mansion of Lady Forrester, the note of preparation was heard. The approach and return of many carriages, which became densely thronged before the Park gates, intimated the doings within them. The lodges on either side were decorated with flags, and rural musicians were stationed beside the doors. A general "*laissez-aller*" appeared to rule the day. On alighting in

front of the noble mansion, Sir Reginald led forward Constance to the lawn, which was the central point of attraction. A large assemblage of the chiefest potencies of the county were already assembled thereon.

The spectacle was an imposing one, as well from the variety and various hues and modes of costume, as from the taste and finish of the arrangements. Two targets of the largest dimensions confronted each other from the opposite extremities of the lawn, while on the eastern and western side, two gay tents were erected, covered with flags and enriched with various devices. The one was a retreat for refreshments, where, on long crowded tables, were heaped all that the artificer of eating could contrive. That which was opposite to it was occupied with tiers of benches, graduating, row above row, as in an amphitheatre. They were already filled with the company, chiefly with ladies,

arrayed in all the hues of the rainbow, the natural dimensions of each fair being magnified by the most imaginative crinolines. A large portion of the crowd was also gathered around each target. In the front of these, and preparing to renew the contest, the archers were congregated.

By a kind of prodigy the sun was cloudless, in a clear blue sky, and who does not know the vitality and the enjoyment imparted to such meetings by his glorious face?

Several of the younger ladies were arrayed in Lincoln green; armed with the quiver at their shoulders and the gracefully-shaped bow in their hands, they looked doubly seductive, and that they were evidently bent on mischief was to be seen in their eyes.

Occasionally, sparsed among the crowd, were to be seen specimens of those who are the observed of all observers—handsome men. They moved among them, as usual, like stars

apart; of whatever human interest they felt in the scene they displayed not the slightest manifestation.

The whole scene on the lawn wanted animation; quiet complacency, and even cheerful dulness, sat on each face; but it was too uniform. It gave the desire to poke or push them forward like tops, if only to set them going.

Young Oxonians glided about, looking simpering and lifeless. As a matter of course, the damsels regarded them with looks of favour. Little flutterings of the heart might or might not ensue among them. But that joyous laugh of gratulation that does the heart good to hear—the joke, the rally, the lively repartee, and the *abandon* of enjoyment, were wanting. Gentle Conventionalism walked on the lawn, and Insipidity followed her, like a shadow. Had such a meeting occurred in France the scene would have been one

busy hum of excitement, a hive of bees without their stings. No crowd of butterflies—each with a tongue—would have been half as noisy, half as restless, half as gay as they. The moments would have been devoured in excitement. Not one would have had a chance of being heard by the other where the tongue of each was taxed to its utmost. The distinctions of race could not be more marvellously contrasted.

It is noticeable how seldom what is termed a handsome man is a favourite with women. The reason is obvious: he proves to her by every glance and gesture that she is already forestalled, that he is far more in love with himself than she can possibly be,—that he has little time or regard to bestow on her impressions.

It has been remarked that among foreigners manly beauty appears to be borne unconsciously. It is to be discerned in every

look and movement, and by a general air of carelessness, that the possessor sets little store on it. We have, ourselves, seen forms and faces in Italy carved in the true heroic mould, borne by those who appeared utterly unconscious of wearing the crown.

Our handsome men, on the contrary, appear to think of nothing else. The eyes of the Narcissus are ever cast on his self-reflection. His glance is furtively on the watch for some new conquest.

The face of a handsome Englishman has a green-grass expression cast over it; a species of tufted verdure, as it were, fresh and healthful, grows around it; the limpidity of the quiet stream shines forth from his eyes; while gazing on his countenance, a sensation of repose is conveyed, as when looking over a smooth and closely shaven turf.

The delicacy of white and pink are mingled in his complexion, conveying the idea of a

man who had been nourished on eggs and milk, or buns and bread and butter.

Such a face, as a matter of course, is devoid of expression—the index of vanity and weakness.

But the character of the man is recognised at a glance. The pale or sallow cheeks, dark eyes, and thoughtful forehead, attest in their lines the furrows of passions that have passed, that have left behind those traces of them by which, or foiled or foiling, he proved himself a man. He carries in his aspect the air of self-possession; the look of one on whom a woman might lean for support—that he had the arm and the heart to guard her.

Women do not affect quiet, unobtrusive, and, doubtless, harmless men who have the appearance as if they

On honey-dew had fed,
And drank the milk of paradise.

They rather prefer men who are nourished on meat, and who drink port or sherry.

Woman institutes no logical reason why she persists in preferring the irregular character to the regular; or, in simpler phrase, the bad to the good. She, in her usual fashion, jumps instinctively to the truth—that the good are sufficiently rewarded in their own contented feelings—and the bad are punished for what they have done in the pangs of their remorse, and, in failure, to the effect that eventually, “both sides are even.”

Thus it is that, while she is gazing on the ideal stage, Macbeth in his remorse, yet daring to the last, leaves a profounder impression than Macduff; while in the pages of romance—in the epic drama of *Ivanhoe*—the powerful character of the Templar, Scott's greatest creation, is preferred to the hero. So, in real life, the man of character and action, who has seen and proved the world, is ranked

by them far above that of the retiring and dreaming enthusiast.

Such a consummation as a loud-ringing laugh, heard along the lawn, and infecting all who heard it, would have rendered the character questionable that gave it utterance; it would have compromised her good taste; the fatal epithet of "oddness" would have been attached to her like an ill-fitting crinoline. Everything was done and said according to rule and measure; that is to say, quietly.

It reminded one of the consolation and the excellent advice which a certain nobleman gave to his not over-talented daughter:—

"My dear, no matter how great a fool you are, it is of no sort of consequence, if you are only quiet;—don't talk, and people won't find you out."

But the business of the archery began. A lady and gentleman slightly advanced together before the group. They quietly drew their

bows, and, having more quietly shot their arrows, interchanged the most quiet smiles, leaving others to follow in succession, enacting precisely the same thing.

Whether the mark was hit or missed, or anything else was hit or missed, though near or farthest removed, was of no consequence; not the remotest allusion was made to it. Some of the young men, clad in the garb of Robin Hood, looked well; they wanted only the "*mens divini*" to animate them. If they had the faculty of the mind, they managed effectually to hide it under the veil of that *mauvaise honte*, by which the Anglo-Saxon, from want of knowledge of life, or from pride, or from shyness, so thoroughly distinguishes himself that he becomes the joke or marvel of the foreigner.

Several of the archers appeared to be young clergymen, judging by their snowy neckerchiefs and fair complexions. They looked

like men drilled to one appearance and one idea—walking, looking, and speaking in buckram.

It seemed as if old Oxford had sent them forth cased up in the armour of mansuetude ; as if, under the visors of their faces lurked no human sympathies. Yet, among those who advanced before the rest, as if ashamed, and apologizing for their existence, were “double firsts,” “wranglers,” &c. The nature of their pursuits had made them what they were ; a gelidity of blood and of spirit had fallen on them ; it was embedded in their system, the effects of wearying lectures and sleepless nights, and the chilly forms of endless restrictions. Not one of them who could not give a good account of the Peloponnesian War, or of selected passages in Homer and Herodotus ; not one whose mind had not been braced up in the stays of Euclid till his brain turned round ; not one who had not bandaged his

forehead with wet towels, while "grinding" to the last hour, and "cramming" himself up for the great or the little "go," to use that child-like and very explanatory term.

The world had not yet kneaded them out of their dough, or set a stamp on them for good or ill, or made them malleable and useful for general society. They were characterless; their minds were white sheets, as yet unwritten on; they had to unlearn all they knew, and to begin the first chapter of the study of man.

Yet, among the gay crowd were some realities, who were what they appeared to be; fortunately for her company, the foremost of these was the Lady Diana herself.

Sir Reginald Mortimer had scarcely advanced on the lawn ere she left the group who were stationed by the targets, and cordially welcomed them. She turned to Constance as to an expected friend.

“This is a double honour which you have done us, Sir Reginald,” giving her hand while taking that of Constance, “from knowing how rarely you appear. Sir Charles is, I am sure, near me,” she added, turning hastily round, as if to find an overlooked article that belonged to her. “Ah, yes, here he is!—he will speak for himself.”

Her husband advanced with many a welcoming bow from his place of concealment behind her crinoline, muttering something which was, no doubt, intelligible to himself. But Lady Diana, in her report of him, had made a slight mistake. The truth was, that Sir Charles never, by any chance, really spoke to anyone. To all inquiries and compliments he returned a smiling bow. It answered every human purpose; all understood him, and he understood all.

A more noticeable contrast than the wife and husband could scarcely be imagined. Sir

Charles might have touched, perhaps passed by, his seventieth mile-stone. He was a small, spare, wiry man, with some faint sparks of vitality still lighted within him. His face wore a oneness of expression to all. He was clad in the tightest fit of Lincoln green, richly embroidered, to the effect of making his very small figure bright, and scaled as it were with gold, closely resembling that of the dragon-fly, from being nearly severed at the waist. His legs, or the apologies which stood for them, were buried in long Spanish top-boots, His quiver, thickly stored, was on his shoulder; his belt was closely fitting, while in his dexter hand was the light bow usually carried by young ladies.

The Lady Diana, from the height of her stature and largeness of her natural dimensions, had to look round her for the discovery of her nonentity. Her ladyship was considered, and justly, as being the largest type

of female proportion throughout the neighbourhood. It was reported that she prided herself on the distinction. Her really handsome and open face was of moon-like fulness, as cheerful and as bright; its proportions were further magnified by the addition of something more than a double chin. If she was arrived at that comfortable age which is pronounced "fair, fat, and forty," she had preserved the freshness of the child. There was a real charm that played round her very handsome mouth, while her light, laughing eyes of blue, and her auburn hair, might have been coveted by the fairest girl on the lawn. Her only unfortunate point of taste was that she persisted in arraying herself in Lincoln green, having gradually widened the dimensions of her suits during the last years. Her eyes, in the meanwhile, had become reconciled to the change in her bodily appearance. Looking attentively

at the Lady Diana, the marvel was that she could shoot at all.

In despite, however, of her peculiar appearance, it might be doubted if, throughout that large assembly, a single animadversion was made on her. Malice itself was disarmed by the frankness of her manners, set off by features whose sunny expression consisted in the absence of all conventionalism.

"And now, Sir Charles," she said, having discovered him, "do you welcome our friends as I have done, for here comes Sir Charles Proteus Hastewell, whom, I believe, you know. We call him among ourselves," she added, silyly, "the perpetual motion, for who ever saw him in a state of rest?"

Sir Charles Hastewell hurried up.

"My dear Lady Diana, I could not find an earlier moment for you."

"Let me present Sir Charles to my friends."

He hurriedly acknowledged the introductions, confusing himself, in the French phrase, in a multitude of bows, hastily accorded.

"The fact is, Lord Doodle wanted my opinion on his mare; then came those endless Turnpike Trusts; then I had to ferret out the tax-gatherer; then Sir Harry Rivers wanted me to ride the steeple-chase."

"Oh, my dear Sir Charles," interrupted Lady Diana, placing her head before his face—"we know that you never rest—even in your bed."

"Having—I thank my stars for it!—no wife to keep me there, the fact is I never do sleep, having so much to do, and no time to do it in. I lie thinking and kicking about all night. My matches and candle are close to me; if any thought rises in my head, or act to be done occurs, I at once spring from the blankets."

"We can't wait a moment longer, Sir

Charles," said Lady Diana, having listened with impatience,—“you see we do nothing without you. All is at sixes and sevens. Look yonder—only look—don't you see the target we are waiting to shoot at is half hidden by people? Do please to disperse them. No human being does these things so nicely as you do. Sir Charles," she added, looking at Constance, “is a perfect duck. It is my turn to shoot, you see. All is at a stand-still because Sir Charles was not here. He is the established Master of the Ceremonies on this occasion.”

Sir Charles Hastewell was thrown into his full element of action. He bustled off to the furthest extremity of the lawn, as if nothing less than life and death were in the matter.

“A most useful man is Sir Charles,” observed Lady Diana, following him with complacent eyes, as the crowd right and left

gave way before him. "Although every one laughs, all make use of him. It is a pity that he is so absent. Twice he has lost a fortune by it. On the morning of what would have been an excellent marriage for him, while his bride was waiting at the church door, he had gone to the Derby. On the next occasion, he had dosed himself with such a quantity of laudanum that he had forgotten both the day and the bride. He is now stamped as the bachelor of the county. No woman will have anything to say to him."

"And yet," observed Sir Charles, who appeared suddenly inspired to speak for once on this particular subject, "in despite of his eccentricities, he is an author and a novelist, of course, but one of the cleverest of them. He can adopt all styles, and, in a fashion, he succeeds in all. Somehow or other, however, his novels leave no impression on the mind. One manages to get through them because

one must ; the books are then put down and forgotten.

“The truth is, they are conceived and brought forth in affectation, and in false style. The eye of the author is never off himself. The truth of the thing, or subject, is nothing : the question is the amount of gloss and newness he can throw over it. The sentiments are therefore overstrained ; you feel that a varnish invests everything and everybody. Truth sometimes appears, but she recites in a masquerade suit, and with a measured tone ; axioms are dealt out in clipped phrases ; you feel she has on silk stockings and dancing-pumps. His good people are too pure, his wicked ones are overcharged ; on the intermediates and blendings of shades between them, the natural infusions of each with the other, he appears to have bestowed no thought. His heroes, consequently, are buskined, and have the dramatic strut ; his

heroines go mad in the usual thin shoes and white satin—lachrymose concoctions made up of sighs and tears, of abandonments and ecstasies, of ice and of syllabub.”

“I,” interrupted Lady Diana, “always put down his volumes in a kind of rage, yet half regretful, in seeing so really clever a man—for cleverness is the exact term that applies to him—hiding the lights and capabilities he has (which all allow) under a bushel, or rather under a mountain of affectation. One *does* want to see the lion come forth, when we feel he is there, and not the absurd mouse. He carries this rage for change even to his name, which, like the talismanic characters in *Vathek*, he is always transposing, when trying for awhile some fresh euphony. He is tenacious on a point wherein none of really ancient family are. I happen to know the descendants of kings, who boast nothing of the matter—for why? They know what they

are, and they leave others to find it out. But here he comes! You will see that, like all earthly authors, he looks his works in his *personnel*."

It is sufficient to observe of Sir Charles Proteus Hastewell, that his whole costume was ornate to a fault. He looked as fresh and new as one suddenly emerged from a band-box. The truth was that his only time which was not hurried was devoted to the toilet.

Meanwhile, the distant target and the intervening space were cleared and left open by the furious onset of Sir Charles.

"For myself," he said to every one he displaced, "I hardly know where to go. When the Lady Diana shoots, the safest and the only place would be the mark, but then I should be too marked, you know"—attempting at a pun. "All I desire is, that every one here be on guard during the next five minutes."

"And now," said Lady Diana to her friends round her, looking radiant in her content—for the bow was in her hand—"tell the band to recommence."

Her husband, who had safely ensconced himself behind her, looking like a dwarf-page metamorphosed into senility, handed forward to her the painted shafts.

"You observe, Sir Reginald," she said, "my bow is marked fifty-two. I prefer a powerful bow, which carries its arrow right home, even to three hundred yards. And now, my dearest husband"—taking a shaft—"you really must not shoot to-day, unless you can pull stronger. Your shortcomings are too open. He is such a poor creature," she added sideways, "that he can really do nothing."

"Now take my advice, and while I am drawing, take two glasses of port wine. Go to the tent, and if you shoot the wider for it,

which is of no consequence, you may at least reach the mark."

The husband glided away, to follow advice which he thoroughly approved.

"It is a remarkable fact, Miss Cleveland," she continued; "but I always observe that when I am about to draw, the company generally get nearer to the mark than otherwise."

"Perhaps it may be," said Constance, "that they feel less apprehension, knowing that your stray shafts, if any, are rare."

"I bow to the compliment, and now you shall both judge of my performances."

The servants had elevated the flags in the distance—the signal that all was ready. Lady Diana slightly advanced.

At that moment, her sagittary and liege lord placed himself by her side, evidently reanimated and improved by his recipe.

"I always like to string my bow," she

said, effecting it with an ease and precision that had been graceful in a slenderer form; "but the truth is, I shoot with more difficulty than formerly; perhaps it is that I am more developed than I once was. Yet you see the ease," she added, "with which I draw the arrow to its full head. Still, as I do feel incommoded, I am obliged to send it off with a twang. My aim, therefore, is not perhaps so steady as it was—as thus." And while speaking, and looking rather at Constance than the mark, she drew her bow suddenly with her full force.

Every creature on the opposite extremity of the lawn was wide awake, well knowing the power of her bow and the strength of the arm that drew it.

It was an undoubted fact also that for some few seconds Sir Charles Hastewell himself was stilled. He held himself, for the minute only, on determined watch.

CHAPTER XVII.

I yearned for human sympathies, and now
I feel like one who hath entrusted all
On an uncertain chance.

The Deluge.

THE drive homeward from Lady Forrester's mansion during the stillness of a summer's night was enjoyable. Sir Reginald Mortimer was silent and preoccupied. Constance became conscious that the reserve was embarrassing, yet she could scarcely have defined wherefore, for the relations between herself and guardian had ripened into sufficient

intimacy to admit of the social silence which is the last enjoyment of confidence—its repose.

“Perhaps,” she said, while assuming a lightly rallying tone, “you will benefit us with your ‘Night Thoughts,’ which I am sure are original, and therefore interesting.”

“You have a full right to infer it,” he answered, in the same tone, “seeing that they affected yourself.”

“Then I have a right to hear them. I am all anticipation.”

“I have been considering whether a life passed in the country suits you.”

“And why should it not do so, if I may ask?”

“That was, indeed, the question I was proposing to myself. You interposed when I had arrived at my conclusion. You love all development of character, because you possess it. It is in the country that it is chiefly found. You can make allowance for

all ; you can be amused by ordinary things, as, for example, the meeting we have left. Andrew Rolfe read the genuineness of your character at a glance,—nay, permit me—I know him well. A crowd of women might have visited him and gained that exact attention which is given to conventionalism ; he has a dread of what are termed literary women. My sister, Eleanor, who has promised us a visit in due time, can make nothing of him, but of his character we shall talk hereafter. Yet Eleanor will amuse, nay, interest you, for she has her points of attraction. Her present intention, she avows, is to leave her boudoir in May-fair, and honour us with a visit ; yet I suspect that we shall give her the example. Meanwhile, I must warn you that she reckons on ranking yourself among her warmest admirers. Now, this same sage who rejected her, opened his inmost self to you—for why ? —he recognized the spirit of truth embodied

in her own form, which is to say, in that of a youthful and beautiful woman."

Sir Reginald Mortimer spoke with an earnestness that increased the embarrassment of Constance. She felt secretly gratified and flattered by his expressions, while they confused her.

He continued, as one absorbed in his own reflections, and unconscious of her embarrassment,—

"During the earlier part of my life, I resided much in town, and I saw many, yet I never found but one friend. He was somewhat older than myself, and he was—your father. Yet our friendship terminated in a mutual quarrel. The cause arose not from the littleness of his nature, but from that of my own. The nobility of that nature he proved beyond the grave, when he confided to my charge a treasure of priceless value—even yourself."

Constance felt agitated.

"That I have felt the position in which circumstances have placed me, you know. I shall be ever grateful, until—"

"You are weary of the branch that gave its light support. You will flit away from it as lightly as the bird, when the summer's prospect opens from the distance. In the chronicles of life, it is written that the debts of obligation are the most oppressive;—you will but do as others have done before you," he added, musingly.

"If," said Constance, "I have, unintentionally, struck a chord that has jarred on your remembrances, I need not say—"

"That you could not know the depth of its vibrations. But another confession I will make to you, I have been less successful in cementing other ties. Under the walls of my castle, wherein he was a welcomed inmate, but living now along a wild shore, a confederate of wilder men, as reckless as himself,

is my nephew, Lionel. , He, too, grew up an orphan from his cradle ; and he became as restless and as undisciplined as the father who left him in the world without a friend."

"Is it not strange," observed Constance, intentionally pursuing the subject, "that the habits of such men should ally with his own?"

"The answer might be found that in gradually adapting himself to an irregular course of life, it has ended in becoming a second nature. He was educated at St. Omer's, until the tutors found that the reins of discipline were unavailing. He rebelled against the shadow of restraint of any kind. He became, at length, involved in a desperate duel with two of the students, in which, I believe, the wrong was done towards himself, and he was compelled to fly. Here, for awhile, he remained under my roof, until his restless character concocted the excitement which he could not find. He

abruptly broke away from restraints he could not endure. He shut himself up in the fortalice on the Point, and became one with the wreckers and freebooters who are said to infest the shore."

"Has he been discovered among them? Have they proofs? Have they met and recognized him?"

"Never; since his settlement at Morte, attempts of a more daring character on the part of the contraband have ensued. Successful landings have been made by the smugglers, better organized, and with evident design. These met but with a single failure, which was the last. For himself, the daring alone would be his amplest reward."

"His mode of life," observed Constance, desirous of softening the case, "however wild and erring, is, at least, unselfish and self-forbearing."

"There may be also," observed Sir Regi-

nald, "another higher attraction. I have heard that Luke Gilmour, the chief among them, has a daughter, not only of a rare and remarkable beauty, but of an uncommon character—her name is Pearl. She is reported as being one by herself. If this be the case, Lionel, or the Master, as they call him, may have an aim in these sea forays, or honourable, or otherwise, but sufficient to bind him to such modes of life. I allude to them chiefly, let me add ; for she, from the report I have heard, is little likely to be led away by anyone, least of all, by a sea-rover."

Constance mused awhile ; there was an air of romance about the whole story which excited her imagination. She secretly desired to see the nephew of Sir Reginald Mortimer, and especially the daughter of Gilmour.

"But," she added, desirous to hear more, "do you not think that your nephew might be recalled, and by yourself, to take up that posi-

- tion in life which he has not too far compromised ? ”

Sir Reginald appeared startled as if from a reverie.

“To what end? I should fail in the attempt by offending his self-love; he would suspect some sinister motive. No gage of defiance has been thrown down between us, and,” he added, after a pause, “I trust that none shall be. My eyes are on him closer than he is aware. I leave him for awhile to run his own course; time and circumstance may effect their usual changes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Il éprouva cette force morale qui nous persuade que nous sommes faits pour une haute destinée, qui nous donne le courage de nous y livrer, et cette estime de soi-même, qui est un des plus puissans mobiles de la vertu.

Agathon.

ON the ensuing morning, Constance was seated by the window of the saloon which opened towards the sea and its wild and desolate shore. A letter which she had just terminated was lying on the table beside her. Its contents will best elucidate her impressions.

“MY DEAR ISABEL,

“YOU are the only friend to whom I could confess, or rather narrate, the history of those daily little events which, however trifling, make up the sum of our lives. And you are my other self and self-reflection. We grew up together, and we were placed similarly in life. Since I last wrote to you, describing this remarkable place, events have occurred, each of which has tended to make me think its master still more remarkable. If I do not at once require your counsel as to how to act or to confirm my own feelings, I feel that I shall soon do so. To whom else could I turn?

“Sir Reginald Mortimer is unlike any character I have met. I feel at a loss how to describe him so as to bring him before you. He is not what we should call a handsome man, because his face is full of expression, and we know how much of this handsome men

possess. His countenance is of so open a stamp that I can scarcely reconcile it to myself when I term him what he appears to be—recollect I say *appears*, because I might see the assumed mask. I consider him, then, a refined miser.

“Now this is so startling an assertion that I know you will at once run into a string of wrong constructions, so that I might as well at once give a string of negatives to each of them. I have no doubt that you will think of closeness, cheese-parings, and lean economies—in short, you will picture forth to yourself that most unhappy species of silent madmen—a miser, or one that looks the character. On the contrary, liberality, faith, and trust seem to walk by the side of Sir Reginald Mortimer, and to look out from each line of his face, while, with regard to toilet, instead of being slovenly or ill-dressed, he is faultless. The table spread before his guests

is lavish, yet showing the refinement of art. Respecting the castle and its apartments, they may have their parallels, but there could be none superior in the design and finish of exquisite taste. Where, then, you will say, is the miser manifested? I answer, in his tongue.

“He considers that the only idol which men really worship in faith and love is Mammon—that all the rest are, more or less, false idolatries. He has no faith in human professions, when self-interest is at stake. He believes that all mankind are wrapped up and allied in one intensity of selfishness. In a word, he affects a cynicism towards his fellow-creatures which is forced, and contradicted by his actions. When among them, which is rare, he appears to be in his natural element. Each feeling of kindness and benevolence that had slept is then opened.

“He is a miser only so far as he attaches a

measureless value to wealth itself, which he calls power, and which he considers, in public as in private life, the source of all human influence. Thus, having accumulated during his long solitude, or rather exileship from society, a vast fortune (for such is the rumour), he has expended it in rendering his abode little less than regal.

“For the higher parts of his character—so much as he chooses to be shown, he appears to be ambitious of leaving some enduring record of himself behind him. He is chary of entering on this subject, but I can perceive that the reputation of public men he appears to consider as a tacit reflection on his own inactivity. Some of these points of character I gained in my last interview with that excellent Mr. Ralph, who evidently knew more than he chose to tell; believing, of course, in the adage—for he is quite an old-fashioned man—that a woman cannot keep a secret.

“Of his early marriage and disappointment I could, therefore, gain little from him. I made, I confess, a slight attempt towards it, but the lawyer prevailed, and gently closed the door in the face of female curiosity.

“Meanwhile, an air of mystery and of romance seems to hang round his appearance and story. It is evident that, at times, a tone of disappointment pervades and tinges the whole character of Sir Reginald, to the effect of rendering him for awhile morbid and uncertain.

“One of his causes of annoyance he has revealed to me in the character of his nephew, or, as he is here termed, the Master of Morte, a character which appears to be as unsettled as his own is staid. I may add, in the meanwhile, that he was the honoured inmate of the castle; that he is now, or appears to be, a confederate, or leader, of a band of desperate men along the shore, who gain their

chief living from the contraband. It was unlikely that characters opposed to each other, but each of the same stamp, could meet and separate without collision. But here I must pause for the present."

Constance, having finished her letter, turned towards the window and silently contemplated the scene beneath her. It was a grey, lowering morning, and the waste and desolate waters took their tone and hues from the element above them. The breakers, in rolling heavily, were spreading out in long white lines on the beach. The cottage of the smuggler then arrested her eye, and the wild-looking boulder-stones that rose on either side, as if to shield it from watching eyes. But not a living thing, or far or near, was visible. The shore appeared to be the very haunt of solitude and desolation. She turned her eyes towards Morte Point and its low square tower, but all was motionless; the master was either

absent or inactive. Here and there a curlew, wandering over the waters or alighting on the margin of the pebbles, redeemed the place from absolute silence.

Mindful of her recent conversation with Sir Reginald, Constance felt a strong curiosity to descend on the beach, under the hope of meeting characters invested with a certain air of romance and mystery. The morning was before her, for she knew that Sir Reginald Mortimer rarely left his study until noon.

At once, throwing her shawl round her, she descended the hall staircase, and, silently opening the door, she passed on to the massive gate of the seaward area, and, opening it, descended a steep pathway hewn in the rock, that led downward to the shore.

CHAPTER XIX.

On she came, that joyous creature,
Sunlight laughing from each feature!

Death of the Old Year.

WHO has not felt, while a visitor at formal halls, the delight of an escape for awhile into comparative solitude, the joy of feeling free? No matter how obscure or lonely be the lane you enter—no matter how waste or bare the heath—it is felt delightful. And why? Because you have escaped from all enclosures—

from park walls, from clipping in shrubberies, from fripperied gravel walks, and, worse than all, from confined air. In one expressive word—we are free. The air, and the sky, and the wind are free around us. We meet as half-forgotten friends,—and we are happy together.

Such was the sentiment of Constance when lightly tripping down the broken and uneven pathway, whose very ruggedness was grateful to her. It was an imposing scene that presented itself on the shore. The aspect of the sullenly-heaving waters, edged with white, gleamed against the darker sky and added to the impression ; while the full strength of the in-rushing tide, breaking in thunders upon the pebbles, reeked upward in mists that, half mantling the cliff, dispersed midway into air.

Constance gazed on the scene with delight ; the tone and the impression given suited the

mood of her mind. Although now close to the cottage which had excited her interest, she hesitated for awhile whether to advance or recede. At length she preferred approaching it from a distance, to the effect of being at first perceived from its casements, ere advancing abruptly, and taking its inmates by surprise. She therefore turned her steps towards the open beach, but in the direction from the cot, until she reached a huge mass of granite, which, hurled from the heights during some night of storm, nearly filled up the passage between the cliff and the sea.

Having reached this point, she was in the act of retracing her way along the sands, when, on turning the serrated side of a lesser crag, she confronted Pearl. Leaning against, while bending over a low edge of granite, she was looking at the breakers as they swept beneath its sides.

Her appearance so little resembled the

picture which Constance had drawn of her, that she almost uttered an exclamation of surprise. Nor could Pearl have been surprised in a more noticeable attitude. Her long tresses of hair, black as the raven's wing, had fallen over her shoulders, the ten-drilling ringlets clustering round, but hiding not, the delicately formed curves of her small and shell-like ear, while her fine figure was admirably relieved against the grey face of the crag.

As she stood thus, abstracted and immovable, she might have been taken for some being whose very home and element were the sea. The black rock, overhanging her with its heavy brows, fantastically tangled with dripping sea-weed, approximated with her dark eyes and hair, while, wrapped in her mantle, a mystery seemed attached to her which added to her remarkable appearance.

The contrast of the two females, thus

brought into sudden conjunction, was striking. The one, in the fairness of her features, appeared like the creature of the northern clime, who had caught in her hair the light of its setting suns; the other more resembled the twilight, staid and imposing. There was a species of mysteriousness in the eyes of Pearl. To look into their depth was like looking into the mazes of a wood, where gazing is lost in uncertainty. And this impression of mystery was heightened by the long pencilled lashes, half shadowing them, as finely as the stamen hangs over the opening flower.

For the moment, each gazed silently on the other; the one, on seeing suddenly by her side, and in that waste solitude, a youthful woman, dressed in the extreme of the fashion; the other, in looking on a figure that seemed a part of Nature round her.

Constance first broke the silence; the ease

acquired from the habits of society made it no effort.

"I feel" she began, although with some slight hesitation under the calm regard of Pearl, "that I ought to say something for breaking in on your retirement."

"What should you say," said Pearl, surprised, to whom all conventional phrase was unknown, "but that you are glad or sorry? Is not the seashore open to all, and as free as the sky which is above it?"

"It is; and I ought to ask pardon for using such idle words, but I forgot that I was talking to one unspoiled by usages of the world."

"I know nothing of the world," observed Pearl carelessly, "beyond the little that I have read; there is my home," pointing to the cot in the distance, "and by these waters I was born, being the reason, perhaps, why I love them. I sometimes think," she added smiling, "that

they have unsuited me for any other position of life. Here, I am content and happy, so that I do not know what I should have to seek for in the great world, if I entered it."

There was a carelessness of utterance, a genuineness of truth in each accent, that made its impression on Constance; perhaps the other was conscious of it.

"I am sure," she continued laughingly, while glancing admiringly at Constance, "that I should be scarcely presentable there, if I were standing near you, for example."

"And why not? I entreat of you to tell me why?" said Constance.

"Because" replied Pearl naïvely, "I can see that I am the entire opposite of yourself, that I am excelled in everything. I feel that you have a manner which I have not, which perhaps I could not have; it seems to me that your expression of face is finer, and when I look at your dress and then turn to my own,"

she added, touching the broad-brimmed straw hat which infinitely became her in her gipsy costume, "I feel that we exactly resemble Cinderella and the princess in the old fairy tale."

"And yet," said Constance, amused, while feeling her interest increase with each word, "believe me, you look far better as you are. No fripperies of dress or trickeries of art, no acquired manner differing from your own, would be as natural to you, or make you a thought happier."

"Certainly not," replied Pearl, in a graver tone. "I would not change my own condition for that of any other. I am content and thankful to remain as God and nature have made me. And then you know," she added, relapsing into her usual animation, "we love contrasts, especially our own, and I am sure that whoever has the happiness of knowing you—"

Constance took her hands with an effusion which was met; the friends were stamped on the moment.

“From our first glance at each other,” she said, “I felt that we were destined to be friends, for I felt that I had that in myself which might be appreciated; I mean sincerity. While looking at you, I feel and know that you are—”

“Indebted to your imagination, or to your charity, if you like it,” interrupted Pearl archly, “for any talent you may give me, which I have not. Do you know,” she added, with a naïvete which made Constance smile, “that I do not possess one single accomplishment; no, not one. How could I have them? Who could give them to me in these solitudes?—I, who have no friends beyond the walls of that cottage. I will not, therefore, let you take me on trust, or give to me a single quality which I have not. I am really

nothing more than a mere child of nature, and to confess the truth," she added in a graver tone, "born beside the sea, and living within the sound of its voice, I believe that I have caught more of my character from nature—I speak it religiously—than from the lessons which I may have drawn from the few books that have been within my reach. I have found that treasure, which sometimes the wise have sought in vain—contentment. I have been taught the lessons of resignation. I have drawn more than I could have gathered from any works of man, while standing by the bedsides of the sick and the dying which are to be found among the hamlets of the gorge. In such scenes I have felt the true value of life, a humility and submission of spirit, which I am sure could not be taught me; and sure I am that I shall not forget them in whatever paths of life I may hereafter chance to tread."

There was a fervour in the manner of Pearl which arrested Constance, and deepened her respect with each utterance.

“And yet,” she continued, “I am full of faults, more spoiled and humoured, perhaps, than yourself, though living in a cottage. I require more restraint, I have too much of free will allowed me. I seem to draw from the sea, by which I have lived, much of its changes and waywardness, and perhaps tones of thought, which the dwellers of the fields or the watchers of the hills could not know.”

There was an earnestness in the words of the enthusiastic maiden that made its impression on Constance. She felt their reality, and the distance that existed between the children of nature and of art. She was conscious that an original character stood before her; one of nature’s mould, on whose heart nothing but that which was genuine could be impressed.

A pause ensued for a moment, which Constance felt no desire to break. Meanwhile, advancing on their way, they had nearly arrived at the cottage.

Pearl then turned suddenly towards Constance, as if the thought had just occurred to her :—

“You are, of course, the resident of the Castle of whose arrival we have heard through the hamlet, and if so,” she added archly, “you may see at once my boldness in leading you to so humble a roof as ours.”

The reply of Constance was expressed in her silent regard. There was no mock-humility shown in the manner, or expressed in the voice, of Pearl ; it was the sentiment and utterance of confidence and of self-respect.

As they reached the door, her natural politeness appeared.

“I must, on this occasion, go first,” she said

on entering, "which I know you would expect, as my good mother, with all her self-possession, might be surprised at an appearance which could only occur once in a life. My father is on the water with his nets. Your name," she added, while entering the little room and gracefully turning towards her, "is—"

"Constance Cleveland."

CHAPTER XX.

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share.

SMOLLETT.

PEARL entered the door of the cottage, and, advancing to the dame, who was seated, repeated it, adding:—

“And the lady has done us the honour of this visit expressly to know you.”

“And to hope also,” added Constance, approaching her, “that we may meet again, having, as you see, already formed something more than an acquaintance with your daughter.”

Constance expressed herself somewhat hurriedly, and with a want of that ease which accompanied Pearl on her entrance. There was cause sufficient in the marked contrast which she felt existed between the daughter and her mother.

The aspect of Dame Gilmour would have commanded respect in any presence, however elevated. Nature had set the stamp on her of a noticeable character. As she sat, she might have represented the figure of Justice, as staid and as grave. On her severely regular features a latent sternness might be traced, that might easily be brought out by circumstance.

She was one of those to whom, if seen in a crowd, the oppressed would turn for protection, reading the rule of right stamped in her face, but the appeal would be less for sympathy than for protection.

Something of contradiction was evident in

such as she being supposed the mother of Pearl. The race and the kind were opposed; it was as if the oak could generate the mountain moss-rose, instead of a germ as strong and self-repellent as itself.

Meanwhile the matron had risen on her entrance; the first surprise, slight as it was, had passed from her face; her keen glance penetrated the thought of Constance.

"I hope you will not remain standing," said Constance, "or you will make me feel the stranger that I am not."

Dame Gilmour resumed her seat while replying:—

"You have done us honour in coming under our roof. Hearing that you were a stranger in these quarters, knowing my position, and seeing your own, may I be so bold as to ask, and be pardoned for asking, if you are a relation of Sir Reginald Mortimer?"

"None whatever," answered Constance,

surprised at the question ; " I am remaining for awhile under his guardianship. Why did you ask the question, if I may ask one in return ? "

" Because," replied the dame tranquilly, " a visit from such as yourself could happen but once in my life. I wished to know the quality of my visitor, for which I have asked your pardon."

Pearl, for the first time in her life, felt that there was something in her mother's manner that jarred on her feelings. The words she uttered were of no marked significance, but the tone and warmth of welcome she felt were wanting in them. There was an independence felt, yet scarcely implied by her manner, and an indifference to consequence, which was apparent if unreal.

Pearl felt embarrassed and ill at ease.

" We met on the beach," she said, while leaning over the back of the dame's arm-

chair; "and we became friends at once, and why is it, mother," she added playfully, "that you seem to look on Miss Cleveland with other eyes than mine?"

"Because mine are opened and thine are shut," replied the dame, changing her phrase, as was her wont when in her earnest moods. "I see God's piece of workmanship before me," she added, while composedly regarding Constance, "and I prize it more than thou dost, Pearl, for I doubt if there be a flaw in that same spotless mirror, which is more than I can say of thee, dearest (taking her hand affectionately), with all thy whims and thy waywardness. But," she added in a graver tone, "while I look on Miss Cleveland with respect, as to my superior, I feel that she and thou hold nothing in common."

"And why?" interrupted Pearl hastily, "why?—I entreat you tell us—why?"

"Both God and man have placed a barrier

between the rich and the poor which is impassable ; and, with respect to rank, hath it not been written,—‘Servants submit yourselves to your masters?’”

“You do not yet know me,” said Constance gently. “Hear me—”

But the voice of Pearl rose above them both.

“Or rather first hear me, the daughter, for I feel that much of my mother’s charge is just. I am inferior to this lady in all things,” she added with proud humility, “and I have confessed it ; yet I feel there is in me—”

“Pearl,” said the dame sadly, “let no mists arise between thee and me. Hear me, child, and mostly thou of the finished mind. I have not always lived by this same shore—I have seen, in other days, something of the life that lies behind us. Let the inferior, and those who love not the truth, disguise it from themselves, but along the paths of this world,

there hath never been an equal meeting and a healthful communion between the rich and the poor. They must meet for awhile, and they must join ; but it is by necessity. Wants, that can only be satisfied by each, bind them together ; but the bands are made of gold, of silver, and of copper. The one looks down on the other for receiving the money which supports his life ; the other feels himself the equal of him to whom he bows. So false and hollow is all mutual community !”

Constance stayed Pearl from replying, who had listened to the dame with impatience unsuppressed. She addressed her with respect :

“No word that you have uttered but is the truth ; yet, if I might say it, there is something, perhaps, of injustice in the tone of colouring which you’ have given. You have evidently thought and studied—”

“Nothing beyond two books—over the one of which, the Bible, the wise dispute each page,

although written by the commandment of God. The leaves of the other, the Book of Nature, are spread open before us all—so that he who runs my read.”

Pearl gazed on her mother with an expression of reawakened interest.

Constance listened in silence, and the dame continued :—

“As you do not reply to me, let the unlearned woman talk on. I sit here, oftentimes alone, and while thoughts are spoken and deeds done, against which my spirit rebels, I strive to draw consolation from that book which God wrote in seven days, and left open before us—the leaves of the Book of Nature. I read therein that all is weighed within the scales of Justice—that equal measure is meted out to all—that not one point of good and evil is portioned out more to one than to another, and that man is compelled to make the greater part of the evil which he suffers.

I see that life is one game played of give and take. As in the Book of Nature, so I find it written in the Book of Life. Nothing is given as a free gift, but all is to be won with effort, and sweat of the brow; with toil and with watching. We support ourselves, for example, by drawing the sustenance of our life from the deep waters. We then barter for the produce of our toil as hardly as if we were thieves rather than self-respecting souls. If we till the earth, and the sun and the air are favourable, we gain our bread by care and watching. The rich will say, as they sit down in purple and fine linen to their tables, "All this is good; the labour is good for them." Let them prove it; let them try the uncertainty, the strife for the crust of bread and the drink of water, until the iron of poverty enters into their souls. You, lady, and such as you—I see the mark on your forehead that God hath set on the bettermost of our kind—are none of

these. But he lives above us, yonder, the man of pride, who, during the many summers that have shone on this cabin, hath never descended among us to recognise his own kind, because the sin of poverty was attached to us."

Pearl moved impatiently, as if desirous of interrupting her, but the dame continued:—

"Yes!" she added gravely, "some few acts he hath done. He hath listened to the wants of the sick and the dying, as the mandates of life and death came to us at their appointed times. But the gifts came, as they ever come from the rich to the poor, with neither sign, nor word, nor look to mark that they came from fellow-man. They were cast to us as superfluities—crumbs that fell unheeded from the rich man's table."

During an accusation which the dame poured

forth, Constance regarded her with a painful impression. But the impatience of Pearl, hitherto controlled by effort, could be restrained no more:—

“Mother!” she exclaimed ardently, “I have read that in the desert the savage respects his guest, even though an enemy. Miss Constance lives under the roof of him whom you have pointed out to her as—”

“Pearl,” replied the dame gravely, “the lady received my reverence on her entrance.”

“But,” said Pearl, “in reflecting on her protector and her support, you reflect on herself—mother,” she added, affectionately, but ardently—“even while you spake, I saw the anger rising in your cheek and eye, and when was ever anger just? You looked as if you were confronting an enemy, and when has ever Sir Reginald Mortimer been so?”

"Never," hastily replied the dame. "I would it were so—that he had done me injuries, that I might have forgiven them; but there are wrongs—"

"Good dame," gently interrupted Constance, "whatever your feeling, you spoke from your heart; therefore you spoke the truth. You do Sir Reginald Mortimer wrong—or, rather, he does himself wrong. In being unjust to himself, he makes others so."

The dame shook her head, but Constance continued:—

"Let my friend of the hour," appealing to Pearl, "be the olive branch of peace between us. Let me even now return with her to the Castle."

Dame Gilmour suddenly rose from her seat, as if the weight of fifty years had been withdrawn from her. Her face was pale, but her manner was impassive, and her eye

fixed on Constance. She stretched her arm towards Pearl:—

“Let her depart to the Hall, and with yourself, if such be her will, for how could she enter it in better company? Dame Gilmour will follow her to the gates; but, when arrived, ere she enters them, I would rather see her—young and glorious as she stands there in her youth and her purity—fall dead at my feet!”

CHAPTER XXI.

The morning mist hangs heavy on yonder isle. The fowl are winging their way to the shore, and making to the cliffs for shelter.

The Pirate.

ON the ensuing morning Constance was stationed at the windows overlooking the shore. Much had been given to her for reflection. The characters she had met thereon absorbed her mind. That some feeling of a deep and rooted resentment lurked in the mind of the remarkable woman she had met there yesterday, was evident, however

much it might have been suppressed. It appeared also equally clear that the sentiment, and its cause, was unshared by, and probably unknown to, Pearl.

The relative ties which existed between them, acknowledged as they were, she could less understand ; for, while the bonds between the mother and daughter were openly avowed, there were certain shades of difference marked in the regards of that grave, stern matron towards her, which seemed unconsciously to prove that they were not so closely allied.

Sir Reginald Mortimer, she also remembered, while occasionally glancing along the shore and the cottage, had scarcely alluded to its inmates, beyond the notice which might cursorily be given to similar obscure abodes, especially when the inhabitants of the shore bore the stamp of an unsettled character.

Nor had they, she recollected, during her

recent visit, made an allusion to the Master of Morte, whatever alliance existed between them. The dame appeared to have slightly alluded to the subject of contraband, but in general tones of disapproval.

While dwelling on such reminiscences, her eye unconsciously rested on the closely-veiled portrait which hung on the opposite wall of the saloon; a portrait respecting which Sir Reginald had hitherto maintained a reserved silence, while freely descanting on the others. The picture of his nephew Lionel, now uncovered, was suspended opposite, revealing a head full of energy. A slight tap at the door interrupted her reflections, and Sir Reginald Mortimer entered, with a brow unusually cleared; an open letter was in his hand.

"You will see by this note," he said, smiling, "that even such a sage as Andrew Rolle is not insensible to the magnetic influence of woman. He has actually proposed a

visit to the Castle, and on this morning, to show and to explain to you (so he writes) some of the rare plants and mosses that grow on the wild Morte Island yonder. He revels among such subjects, and is eloquent on what he loves. As I never knew him to make such a proposition before, I consider you to be the Ariel who can draw this Prospero from his cell. I hope such propositions," he added, smiling, "may not lead to others of a more marked character."

"The sage must choose a wiser woman than I," said Constance in the same tone, "but I think he is already married to the science which has been his mistress through life."

"But I do not think he has well chosen his morning," observed Sir Reginald, while throwing open the window, and glancing at sea and sky, and along the shore. "The time is quiet, yet there is a sullen and lowering aspect already

manifesting itself along the horizon, the sky, and the water. The fishermen, I see, have drawn their boats higher up the beach, but that precaution might be taken against the spring-tide."

He had scarcely finished speaking when the door of the apartment opened, and Andrew Rolle entered in the manner he most loved, unannounced, and as one to whom the master and the house were familiar.

Sir Reginald received him with the welcome of a friend, Constance with unfeigned gratification.

"We were just lacking the sage at our council-board," he said, "when he enters and takes his place. We were distrusting the aspect of that fatal enemy to English out of door amusements of all kinds—'the weather.'"

"That poor weather," he replied smiling, "which is always too unjustly vilified. And yet you may assert of English climate—that

which you can assert of no other—that scarcely a day throughout the year is given during some period of which you may not emigrate from your door. In other lands, between the extremes of heat and cold, you are confined to the house for days or weeks together. You are, I suppose,” he said, turning to Constance, “the fair unbeliever of the morning? Believe in me”—looking outward —“Nature this morning is in what young ladies might call a pouting frame of mind, verging towards a naughty temper. The mists on her forehead may break forth in tears, if they receive the slightest provocation from these irritating winds; and as for the waters—always unruly—there is nothing they better love than to shout forth their defiance and do battle on the pettiest irritation. I do think, however, that such little freaks of temper should be overlooked. If the sun appears, you know Nature at once takes and makes a holiday, and

who reads not then her pleasure in her face? He is, you see, even now, trying hard to show his face. Those clouds, whose bosoms are full of light, are already expanding themselves. The worst that could happen would be a storm in a slop-basin; therefore, I say, let the word be 'onward,' for a joyous day at the isle, whereon I have things to show that will interest you both."

"Be it so," replied Sir Reginald; "and, to make assurance doubly sure, we will entrust the cutter and ourselves to the experience of old Ben Rattlin, assisted by his son, and all will be well. If the old man has a fault, it is over-prudence. He is considered as the very Nestor of our shore."

CHAPTER XXII.

The winds were high, the sea was dark,
The lightnings flashed above; the bark
That anchored in the craggy bay,
Bathed her top-pennon in the spray:
Hollow and gloomy as the grave,
Rolled to the shore each mighty wave.

Old Ballad.

MEANWHILE, the hours glided on unheededly during the stay of the party on the isle, as time ever glides when we are absorbed in any recreation which is interesting and delightful. But that cutter, on its departure from the mainland, had been watched by other eyes

than those on board, and the aspects of the weather, of sea and sky, more closely still.

The evening had advanced, and with it, the sea had become dark and swelling. The whole face of the deep had gradually changed its character; the waves became edged with spray, hissing over them in foam. The grey brows of the clouds, as they hurried along, held a similar tone, and the bearding and angry scud drifted beneath them. The wind had freshened, and breakers, three abreast, began heavily to fall on the pebbled beach. One red fiery line, gashed along the western sky, as if cleft within the forehead of the dying day, marked where the sun was sinking among mists that gathered round its rayless disk.

From the opened casement of her chamber, Pearl had for hours watched the aspects of the sky and water. The smuggler, absorbed in his occupation of repairing and lightening

the lugger, disregarded all else; the matron had passed over to the hamlets in the glen; but Pearl sat as immovable as a sentinel at his post. She watched for the approach of an enemy whose coming was felt, for the long habit of watching the weather had given the prescience of certainty. The opened telescope was placed on the table beside her, but it remained unused. Her eyes were keenly and intently fixed, not on Morte Point, but on the isle beyond, whose dim form was now gradually disappearing and confusing itself in the obscurity of the mantling vapours.

Suddenly a low black mass emerged forth, as it were, from its innermost recesses, and at once rose and fell, and was hidden among the troughs of the heaving sea. On its instant appearance, Pearl bounded from her seat and hastened down the staircase. Karl was seated by the casement in the room below; he watched with folded arms the

evidently coming storm. The cutter had now heaved into far-sight, and had become distinctly visible; his eyes were steadily fixed on her, but it was the regard of indifference.

Pearl, rapidly passing the floor, paused for a moment, and then stood before him.

"Karl, follow me!" she said, throwing forth her arm into a gesture of command while pointing toward the waters.

There was that in her voice and manner which would have wakened excitement in apathy. The giant looked at her, and rose at once, as if her slightest behest were a command. It had ever been so from his childhood. Pearl had been held in his eyes as something sacred; to obey her, to fulfil her slightest request, to bow to her caprice, had been the law of his being. He had ever looked on her as something of which he was utterly unworthy. Karl could have given no account of the species of idolatry which he

felt towards one who had grown up beside him as his natural sister. While he regarded her as something utterly apart from himself, he jealously considered her as, in a fashion, appertaining to himself. The idea that she could be led away from that cottage as the bride of another had not entered his calculation. He forgot the past, he was insensible to the future; he lived in the present only which she filled: all else was nothing. He believed in her with a blind credulity, as an idol set up in the rude desert of his heart, where he could pour forth, unseen and unheard, his solitary devotions. He felt only that she was a tutelary spirit; that in the sullen and secret cells of his being he silently worshipped her. The softness and gentleness that shone forth from her eyes and manner had entered into him, tempering the harsher asperities of his parents, while confronting her against the strongest relief.

She hurried onward along the shingle without turning, for she felt that he followed her. She did not look round until she had placed the boulder crags between them and the cottage. They were then unseen and alone ; her eyes were fixed on the bark. Karl stood close beside her, but she was unconscious of his presence.

By this time the bark had heaved more fully into sight. She was staggering on under a full pressure of sail, gleaming out against the dark water and the sable sky. From the weight of canvas pressing on her, her bowsprit was burying itself in the foam, cleaving heavily through, instead of rising over the troughs of the sea, which impeded her way.

Pearl saw at a glance the error. She turned suddenly round on Karl, who stood as impassive as a rock beside her.

He was watching the boat with a peculiar expression, which might have been construed

into something like a seaman's contempt, mingled with a secret satisfaction : both were unnoticed by Pearl.

" You see, Karl," she hastily said, " they make their danger in making no way ;—who has her in hand ? "

" Why, old Rattlin and his lad are at the helm, and what else could you expect but what you see ? The great man of the castle, yonder, chooses his own pilots, and he must abide the consequence."

Pearl's eye was riveted on the vanishing and reappearing cutter. The words of Karl were unheeded, for the breakers were filling the beach with sound.

He continued :—

" Old Rattlin, you see, is afraid of the black weather that is running on after him fast enough. He thinks to get the first start, and he don't see that he is just burying himself in the water, instead of running over it. With a

flying jib, and under bare sticks, he might have made in out; perhaps," he added, considerately, passing his hand across his chin, like one who was nicely weighing the merits of a case on a point of nautical judgment.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Pearl, suddenly turning round and confronting him, like an amazon of old. "Is this a time to stand thus idly on the bank when the good and the brave are sinking! Are they not in imminent jeopardy of their lives?—do you not see that they are?—Are you not a man, and can you stand thus, with those large arms folded over your breast, like a helpless child?—Where is the hand of iron—and the heart that should be stronger still?"

"And what is there to be done?—and what can I do?" remonstrated Karl, sullenly, and aroused by her fiery appeal. "Our lugger is high on the beach in repair—our boat wouldn't

live a minute out in yonder water—and couldn't come to time, besides."

Pearl's face was again averted to the downward-plunging cutter, now abruptly rising and then lowering, as if oppressed with labour. The rapidly advancing storm and the imminent danger paralyzed her. The pulsings of her head were audible; the colour that had mounted to her cheeks now left them in deadly paleness.

"Why, look yourself—how the old man is crowding on every stitch, when she shouldn't have a rag on her flying; and he don't the while see that she is shipping tubfuls! He has lost his memory, he has—he's afraid, and so are they with him! Why, he don't see that he's got 'Windy Gap' to pass yet, which you can scarcely pass in calm weather excepting under bare sticks."

Pearl's eye rapidly glanced at the gorge that opened in the centre of the promontory.

“Gracious Heaven!—And so he has,” she ejaculated.

A deep fissure between the low hills opened on a gorge formed between them, through which, in stormy weather, the concentrated winds, in their fullest force, swept into the little bay.

“He don’t look to me as if he remembered it,” observed Karl, doubtfully, his eyes fixed on the boat, now rapidly approaching it; “he must be turned clean daft with fear.”

“And you think,” exclaimed Pearl, hastily, while grasping him by the arm, “that in passing she will sink?”

“As certain as we stand here. She is now but a feather before the wind. You may guess what her chance is with the sea that is rolling outside there.”

Pearl leaned against the crag for support.

“Oh! that the master were at his tower,”

she mentally ejaculated, "their only hope of safety, and, alas!—too late."

The ejaculation was scarcely uttered when the wish appeared forestalled. A long, low boat shot forth suddenly from the Point, looking like a black snake writhing its path along the sea. She showed no canvas beyond a single strip of sail gleaming from her jibboom, that carried her like an arrow over the waters.

A sudden but suppressed exclamation, which might have been wrath or surprise, or a mixture of both, escaped from Karl, but it was unheard. Pearl's eyes were averted from him. She was breathlessly absorbed in the closer approach of the cutter, staggering heavily on and forging her path through the waters, with the Windy Gap now close on her lee.

The scene at that moment was one of intense excitement. The cheers from the lugger,

bearing down on her like a greyhound, were distinctly heard; then a sudden, shrill cry arose from the cutter, half buried in the foam, and the next moment, struck suddenly by the wind, she was laid flat upon the waters. At the same instant the lugger passed over the place where she had vanished. Sir Reginald, clinging to the rudder, was still upholding Constance; and Andrew Rolle, in a state of insensibility, was already relaxing his grasp on the canvas.

The lugger, in passing, veered suddenly round in the wind's eye, while, with a movement as rapid, the strong hands within her rescued the drowning from their perilous position. The master drew up the form of Constance as lightly as if she had been a feather. In another moment the bark ran in among the breakers, but, her rudder untended in the confusion of the moment, she broached to, and was hurled sidelong on the beach with

such force as again to endanger the scarcely rescued lives.

The master, struck by a stone, while thrown forward from her, lay for awhile apart and insensible. Meanwhile, the servants of the Castle, forewarned of the danger, were on the beach, and carefully bore up the rescued lives in a state of insensibility to the Castle.

Pearl was about to advance hastily towards Constance, but the hand of Karl was gently placed on her arm. He pointed to the servants, who had already gathered round her.

The master remained apart, untended save by the rough seamen who gathered round him.

During this rapidly passing scene Karl remained in the same place, immovable, at some slight distance from the group. Pearl, receded also from observation, was by his side. Her eyes were now riveted on the seaman who,

still supporting him on his knee, looked round for other aid. Pearl abruptly advanced from the shadow of the crag. She pointed with her arm toward the master, fixing her flashing eyes on Karl.

“Karl! do you not see?”

Karl, avoiding her regard, fixed his eyes on the prostrated form of the master.

“I see,” he sullenly replied, “a sight common enough. I see a man stunned by a blow from a capsized boat, who, it may be, even now, is well nigh able to right himself.”

“How!” exclaimed Pearl. “Have you no sympathies in you?—no memories of past benefits?—or are you a brother man?”

“What would you have me do?” he abruptly replied, while turning on her for the first time in his life with a contracted brow.

“He is tended by his own man. What more could he have? I am no slave of his to tend on him.”

"White-hearted man!" she exclaimed. "Have they not to save their boat, now beating to pieces on the shingle, while you stand idly by? And have not the servants of the Castle neglected him by design? Save or the boat or the man—the one or both! When you were once lying prostrated with fever, who tended on you, as you call it, when your mother feared infection, and stood aloof?"

"You — only you," replied Karl, sullenly.

"And, when you lay in delirium, when even your strong father feared to come within the reach of your arms, who stood as near to you as if you were the weakest child?"

"Why, you, to be sure," answered Karl, regarding her with an awakened and startled expression.

"Ay, so indeed, you remember it," she

added, taxing her fine features to express their uttermost scorn—"and now, Karl, mark me! I swear by the sky above us, that, unless you at once cast those strong arms of yours round yonder fallen man, carry him to the cottage, and there watch over him as I have watched over you—I swear to you that I will shame your manhood for ever by attempting to support him there myself!"

There was that electrifying power in the voice and gesture of Pearl that told instantly on the giant.

He neither replied nor looked at her; but, bounding from the crag against which he had leaned, he strode forward at once. He raised up the master from the seaman's knee, drew his left arm carefully across his broad shoulders, and bore him along as lightly and as unimpeded as if a feather were in his grasp.

He turned towards Pearl with his burden, but she hastily led the way towards their home.

Once only she turned and made a gesture towards him, as if of approval. Karl rapidly followed her over the shingle to the cottage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ill dost thou to feed vain thoughts,
And jealousies, which, parasital plants,
Cling round and waste thy strength ; arouse thy reason,
Rule thou the mind thou wert ordained to govern !

The Deluge.

ACCIDENTS of life, the least foreseen, sometimes become the fortunate means of unities which no other mode could have so well effected. Such a reunion had been suddenly formed between Sir Reginald Mortimer and his nephew.

The expressions of gratitude and of recognition which had found their fullest effusion

rom those who owed to him their lives at the hazard of his own, could not but be felt and acknowledged by the Master of Morte. They were reunited; and if the rents and flaws of former disunion were recalled, the scars had healed. The presence and influence of Constance, like a ray of light opening between them, softened the edges of remembered asperities.

Yet, between spirits when wholly opposed to each other no cemented union can ensue; the junction is in its nature temporary. If the free and outlaw species of life, as led by Lionel, had been repugnant to the one, the cold reserve and the self-isolation of Sir Reginald were less understood by the fiery temperament of the nephew. Excepting when in the presence of Constance, a felt restraint existed; it was lessened by circumstance, but it was unremoved. The chances, which for the hours had bound them together, habit could not retain.

The effusion of excited feelings cannot endure ; their own excitement fatigues them. The expression of gratitude and of thankfulness is the last and finest florescence of the tree of human nature, and the first to be blighted or withered. The fervour on either side had tamed down ; each had insensibly returned to his former position.

In the meanwhile, another feeling had awakened in the breast of Sir Reginald Mortimer. He appeared to watch the attentions of Lionel to Constance with a jealous eye. For such a sentiment there appeared little cause. Beyond the deference and the chivalrous manner of Lionel towards Constance, which her presence might be said to command, the most scrutinizing eye could gather nothing of undue attention. He appeared, or feigned to be, indifferent or insensible to the presence and influence of woman. It seemed as if he offered his respect as a tribute due to himself, rather

than from the slightest effusion of sentiment : a fault which was almost as unvenial in the fastidious eyes of Sir Reginald Mortimer.

But the real source of his irritation proceeded from a deeper root. From the hour when Lionel abandoned the Castle and its restraints for the freedom and independence of the shore—from the day when he chose the rude tower on the promontory, and became the Master of Morte, instead of the kinsman and the guest of the Castle, an inalienable breach was made between them ; and this revulsion assumed a deeper tone, and the gulph between them was more inseparable, when all but absolute proof was found of his connection with the outlawry that existed along the shore. A day or two spent at the Castle was necessary to give an apparent cement to an impossible reunion, but they were hours of restraint, and mutually endured.

On the morning of the announced departure of the master, Constance, seated in her favourite recess, was deeply occupied in a second confessional to her friend.

“MY DEAR ISABEL,

“I feel now assured that what is termed romance and romantic adventure—that is to say, life as it ought to be, which it once was, and cannot be again—always exists in detached gleams and nooks somewhere on this earth. It may be hidden or buried among the conventionalisms of town life, but even there it exists, and is secretly cherished. Like the flame in the lamp of the Vestal, it is hidden, because unbelieved by those who never saw its lustre or proved its purity.

“For, what is it to be romantic? It is to be full of faith and hope—to believe in all profession that is made to us. But it more exists in the country, where the heart is less

hardened or petrified by usage and conventionalism. I am here suddenly transplanted into its most secret haunts. Could I do less than confess to you what I have seen, without a tone or shadow of undue colouring given to the tale?

“Along that wild shore that lies under my eye, I have met a matron, but a veritable one of the elder time. Such a one as we read of in poetry, but rarely or ever see in life. Our mutual converse shall be told to you hereafter. But how shall I describe the daughter who led me to her with a manner of her own?

“She suddenly rose up before me among the rocks and the waves. She seemed to be a part and portion of them, which is all the description I intend giving you. All I could say of her is, that the openness of the sea, its purity and freshness, seemed met in her. For the rest, I imagined something between Miranda and Beatrice—the maiden stateliness of the one blended with the vitality of the

other. But Pearl—such is her name—unites in herself a third element. Beneath features of rare beauty, such as I have not seen equalled, there appeared to me to lurk hidden—perhaps unknown to herself—something of the latent Amazon; yet this, perhaps, is speaking unduly. What I wish to express is a female who, however impulsive—and she appeared formed of impulses and energy—would unite to them also an equal moral courage.

“You will say that I am infected with the romantic fever myself. Far otherwise; I could scarcely over-colour the portrait of this remarkable female. I can only add to it that, while standing on the beach beside her, I felt myself as a kind of feathery nothing, an exotic of fashion and frippery dropped there by mistake, quite out of place; while she, wrapped in her dark scarf, and with light straw hat, looked as if she belonged to Nature and the scene.

“Let me not forget to add that the visit to the matron, which had commenced, as I hoped, under favourable auspices, was not destined so to conclude. On my proposition that the daughter should accompany me to the Castle, a scene, or rather a situation, in the drama ensued, which embarrassed me. The dame forbade the visit, and with the air and manner rather of a queen than of a fisherman’s wife. As, with a feeling that I believe none other could have assumed, the daughter submitted to her mother, I could only retreat from the stage, with the affectionate regard of this pearl of price turned on me to the last. It was accompanied also, I am bound to add, with sedate forgiveness, implied in the look, of the matron.

“Here I must turn for awhile from the dwellers of the shore—but to return—for sure I am that much more remains to be unfolded of them. I feel that a drama of

action is playing along that lonely beach, a drama which may be startling in its effects, and that I have seen those who shall be among the chief actors.

“But the hand of circumstance has not yet drawn up the curtain.

“I must now return to that fearful storm of which I gave you, in a hurried note I sent, too brief a sketch. I have often read of the devotion of men towards women in the hours of extreme danger, but then I had never seen it exemplified.

“Absorbed over the mosses and plants of the little isle during the early part of the day, and by the eloquence of him who dwelt on them as if they were his children, we did not perceive how the storm was gathering until it overshadowed us. On our hastening down to the beach, I was startled at the changes which six hours only had caused in the appearance of the sea. We left the field, and hurried on

board the cutter ; but not until the shelter of the cave was left, did we perceive the strait we were in ; it was then too late to return. To unused eyes, we seemed to be in instant danger of sinking among the troughs of the heavy sea, that, whitening with foam, heaved and fell around us. In such moments, the ocean appears to be a living thing, heaving restlessly beneath the feather that floats on its surface, looking in the lines of its leaden face as remorseless as the death it threatens. The old man at the helm appeared confused, and his son was evidently terrified. Sir Reginald Mortimer exclaimed :—

“ ‘ Act, and at once. Your part is to get within cover of the bay with all speed, before worse things come up from behind us.’ ”

“ The announcement was too true. The blackness of the clouds, now rapidly advancing over us, was fearfully contrasted with the white scud that drifted beneath them. Thus

exhorted, the old man and his son crowded on all canvas, and we went on at a fearful rate through the water. The head of the boat was at times buried in foam, and the water rushing in. I gave myself up for lost ; I felt certain of death on each instant, and, crossing my hands, I mentally and fervently prayed.

“ Meanwhile, each of our friends embodied his character—the passive and the active. Mr. Andrew Rolle drew close beside, as if to shelter me from the water. He took my hand, and sat like a rock of self-defence.

“ ‘ Whatever is to be must be,’ he said, in a low voice. ‘ It is our part to meet it with resignation and endurance.’

“ The imminent danger called forth all the energies of Sir Reginald. He animated the men with his voice and gestures, and, while unceasingly baling out the water, that else had filled and sunk us, he was momentarily at my side, with that cheerful look and voice

of command, which acts like a rock of support in the hour of doubt and fear. His eyes seemed never off myself, as if to ensure my safety were his sole object, and that no other life was jeopardized.

“Meanwhile, we were rapidly entering the bay, and, having passed the Morte Point, I felt a weight removed from my heart. Suddenly Sir Reginald shouted out in a voice that drowned the noises of the sails and foam, ‘Draw in all—we are on the Gap—’ At the same instant, I felt a rushing wind; I was thrown at once into the sea. I had no time to scream, or to grasp at anything; I only felt the cold waters rolling over me; that a clogging sail was stifling me, to which I clung. I then became conscious of an arm supporting me. Sir Reginald was by my side, and Mr. Rolle was convulsively clinging to the canvas. On the same instant, I caught a glance of a boat that appeared as if riding

over us. I then became choked and insensible. I heard the hollow sounds of waters, and I remembered nothing further.

“The only pain I felt was in my recall to animation. I became slowly conscious of faces bending over me, among which I recognized Sir Reginald Mortimer. But why further dwell on my unworthy self, when a subject of deeper interest is pressing on my mind, and which I must confess to you, although I scarcely know how to enter on it?”

CHAPTER XXIV.

He stood less as a man than statue, placed
Upon an eminence, casting me in shade,
He looked down from his isolated pride,
On human weakness, jesting with its pangs.

Life's Episode.

CONSTANCE paused, and, laying down her pen, appeared for awhile absorbed in her reflections. She rose, and opened the casement to the sun, which shone brightly into the apartment. A ray of its light, subdued and chastened, fell on the picture of Lionel Mortimer, imparting to it a life-like semblance.

She stood before it, contemplating the bold and haughty forehead, and the character of decision expressed by the head and bearing.

A sigh suppressed startled her from her reverie. She turned suddenly, and the Master of Morte stood before her.

"Miss Constance," he said, with that quietude of manner which contrasted with his appearance, "is losing her time in regarding the shadow of a worthless substance."

"I, at least, have no right to say so," she replied, recovering herself, "remembering that to the original of that portrait, I, and those far worthier, owe our lives."

"Women," he observed, his eyes remaining fixed on the canvas, as if unheeding her remark, "are made up of recognisance or gratitude. It is a part of their finer nature, from which men have drawn the little of it they possess. Women never forget an obligation, no matter its kind. Men take the

sponge of selfism and dele the record at once ; and if the tale of the obligation be repeated, their gratefulness turns into repulsion. I don't believe that a really grateful man exists. I have never found one, and if you look into the history of man, you will find that the blackest and the longest chapter of the volume is that of human ingrati- tudes."

Constance regarded the master with surprise :—

" I really do not understand—"

" I dare say not," he continued, " forgive my interruption—I mean that gratitude is an effusion of the moment, an impulse of the hour, and is un- renewable. It is the same with first love, first hate, which has its indulgence without satiety, first everything in short," he carelessly added, " excepting ambition. For myself, I expect nothing from human nature. I use it, and I am used—the scales between us are equally poised."

"You must have gathered already a large experience from life," said Constance, gravely, "and as largely sown as reaped, to express such confessions in the opening of that life."

"Some few men live years in hours, the larger part, hours in lives—I rank among the former class; besides, I judge of others by myself," he added, carelessly. "The wisest of men have told us to do so, themselves setting the wholesome example. I know something of myself, and that knowledge is the lamp whereby I regard others. For instance, let us glance a moment round our little stage here—a stage such as is reared within every domestic circle, each occupied with its *dramatis personæ*. Let us observe our relative positions thereon, and how we play our parts, Does it interest you," he asked, abruptly, "or shall I fatigue?"

"On the contrary, pray go on—I feel really interested."

“Let us begin, then, with yonder shore. There dwell a set of men, say rather, of human bull-dogs; yet, who live in a lawless fashion, without an Iscariot among them. They would lay down their lives for me, because they consider that I am one of themselves. They saw that I chose yonder square tower, whose walls are bare as my hand, in preference to this palace. And why do I cling to that shore, to its savagery, to the rough life, and to the wild kind of excitement round me? Because I find the thing I seek—freedom and the open shore. They cling to me because I am of use to them, as they are to me. Yet, I confess the truth, that I owe everything to him who lives buried here in his solitude. I was thrown on the rough edges of the world, an orphan and an outcast; he it was who took me in.”

“And,” said Constance, interested, “may I ask what could loosen such bonds of union, setting aside your consanguinity?”

“The daily oppression of his grave demeanour, the character which I felt was impenetrable by the fiery impulses of such a one as myself. I saw that he had reserves which would not be opened, that I could not fathom. I saw that the savagery of the rocks and solitude suited him. An atmosphere of mystery is around him; and sure I am that there are, existing in life, or have been removed from it, those who have looked on that impenetrable man until they became withered by his presence. Yonder portrait, hung in the recess, curtained up and locked as carefully as if life hung on it, is that of some hidden or extinct light that once brightened his existence and, perhaps, turned to him in vain.”

Constance did not interrupt the pause.

He slowly continued:—

“If I could be surprised at anything, it would be how so fair a thing as yourself found your way into these deserts, leaving

a society beyond whose precincts I can scarcely realize your existence."

Constance felt her cheeks suffuse; she did not sufficiently allow for the frank expressions of an ardent temperament.

The master continued:—

"Although gleams of sunlight sometimes fall on the human glacier with which I lived, the chill and repulsion were insupportable. He lived in imagination; I thirsted for realities. I had led an impulsive life abroad: I could not sit down as he, and watch or weigh the sands falling from the hour-glass. I saw men along the shore, as free as the waters they rode on. I mingled among them; I loved their freedom; in a word, I became as their leader for the want of a better man. I am not so dark as I draw myself. I longed for the hour when I might free myself from the debt of obligation—for I had not forgotten the

nobility of the spirit I had left. The hour came, and with it the man. When I dragged him up forth from the waters, I felt that we were equal."

Before Constance could relieve her mind from the painful feelings caused by the master's revealments, the door opened, and Sir Reginald Mortimer entered.

A single glance at Lionel, and an instantaneous one on Constance, fixed one of those impressions that are at once made and confirmed. The youth and romance that hung around the character of the one, the meridian of life and the reserve that dwelt with the other, the impressionable and ardent heart of a youthful woman, flashed at once on his mind.

But the mistrust of his regard was met and neutralized by the self-possession of both.

"I have bidden Miss Constance farewell for the present," observed the master, inclining

towards her, "while for yourself," he added, turning to Sir Reginald, "I have only to hope that when next you take the sea, you will choose your kinsman for your steersman."

"There passes a spirit from us," said Sir Reginald, "that nothing but time and life will tame, which they must do in their own season. He will hazard his life for others, yet repel gratitude, until virtue itself, by repulsion, becomes a vice."

"Perhaps," suggested Constance, "having done the deed, he felt it to be its own reward? You know that there are natures that shrink from the voice of praise as of blame—and he is of them; thus let it rest. Meanwhile, I have received intelligence which will waken your interest. Andrew Rolle is seriously ill from the effects of fever, and the continual want of sleep. He will scarcely, I fear, recover from the effects. Let us depart

and see him. Here is a note I have received, characteristic of himself,—

“ ‘Dear Friend,—I grieve to cast a shadow over your brow, and, perhaps, on that of a fairer one, on which it might lie too deeply. The over-excitement caused by an untoward event has brought on me a fever which will not subside. I permit the doctor to interfere with a shattered framework which he cannot repair. I have no medicinal faith. I look forward to one more rewarding visit from yourselves.—Farewell.’ ”

“The misfortune of such temperaments,” observed Sir Reginald, “is, that in forestalling the evil they half create it, and certainly add to its power. Yet, perhaps, the very debility of illness causes the fatuous impression; so inextricably are the bonds of spirit and of its dust allied. Let us hasten to him. Nothing can fall from the lips of Andrew Rolle that Truth itself might not hear. I have known

him intimately well in other years, and I know not whether I more respect or love him. Each hour, or rather, each moment of our delay, will be felt by him as a loss, which he will set down to his own unworthiness."

END OF VOL. I.

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